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THE  
LIFE  
AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE  
OF THE CELEBRATED  
**LADY GUION;**

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

EXHIBITING,  
HER EMINENT PIETY, TRAVELS, AND SUFFERINGS.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED, HER

**POEMS,**

*Translated by William Cowper, Esq.*

AND A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE LIVES OF SEVERAL OF HER MOST  
EMINENT FRIENDS, VIZ.

FENELON, ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY,  
MICHAEL DE MOLINOS, AND ST. TERESA.



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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE reader will view, in the course of this translation, the progress of a holy pilgrim, not fictitious but real ; a life of no common sort ; from its birth upward attended with remarkable events, assaulted with troubles and inured to oppositions, a soul filled with the love of God ; from him deriving, and instrumentally diffusing, a happiness undefiled, incorruptible, unhurt by storms, and growing firmer in persecutions ; ensuring on high its everlasting duration, in a state of boundless perfection and purity.

Of the sundry other species of biography, is there any worthy to be put in the balance against this ? What are all the adventures of the curious, or, acquisitions of the covetous, but the trivial blaze of a moment when compared with eternity ? What the splendour of military achievements, but the detestable havock of the destroyers of mankind ? What the dark intrigues of rivals, or profound politics of statesmen, however successful ? Are they not generally incompatible with our Lord's golden rule, *of doing unto all men as we would desire them to do unto us* ? What the inventions of art, effusions of wit, or elaborate productions of human industry ? They have their reward : But in a narrow limit. Their encomiums may spread around this globe, and that is their widest circle. What the highest elevations on earth, but tottering, or slippery, pinnacles ?

Such are the subjects, and the lives, which engross the greedy attention of a great part of mankind. Passing by the principal point unregarded, as it presents no pleasing entertainment to a vitiated taste, they therefore *prefer lying vanities*, though at the constant hazard of being fatally deluded, and drawn down by them to the habitations of their miserable victims. No attainment is safe and happy, but

that of the soul which, through every obstacle, arises to the obedience of the laws and dictates of its Creator, to be fitted thereby for endless communion with him, and with all that are his, in his blissful and glorious kingdom.

The following narrative affords a shining instance of one who attained it. Though her lot, in a dark and arbitrary country, subjected her to many great disadvantages; yet through faithfulness to what it pleased God to discover to her, she appears at length, in purity of heart, to have surmounted them. This gives room to hope that her memoirs may prove of valuable service to many, an instructor to the ignorant, a monitor to the negligent, a confirmation to the pious, and a consolation to the afflicted.

Especially such as, either in a single or a married state, meet with heavy crosses and disappointments, may be likely to relieve their dejection, and receive fresh encouragement, of the best kind, by tracing her steps in life; wherein they will see, that she wisely applied her whole heart to "lay aside every weight, and the sins which had easily beset her, to run with patience the race set before her, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of her faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hence the most unreasonable hardships with her took the best turn; as, under the directing hand of her Redeemer, they became the means of her greater sanctification.

An abridgment appeared more proper for publication than her whole account, because she seems to have designed it at first for private rather than public use. The same things, from her earnest desire to inculcate them, are rather too often repeated. Often also occur little incidents not so material; and such as peculiarly belong to that church of which she was a member.

THE  
**LIFE OF LADY GUION.**

PART FIRST,  
FROM HER BIRTH TILL HER LEAVING FRANCE.

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CHAPTER I.

ADDRESSED BY LADY GUION TO HER DIRECTOR.

SINCE you require me to write you the whole series of a life so extraordinary, so fruitful of pains and trials of patience, as mine has been, I am willing with all my heart to obey your order, though to me the task appears painful in my present condition, which admits not of much reflection. I could wish extremely, that it were in my power to convey into your soul an adequate idea of all the goodness of God to me, and the excess of my ingratitude : but it would be impossible for me to do it, as well because you desire me not to be too particular in enumerating my sins, as because I have forgot many things. I will try however to acquit myself to the best of my ability, relying on your assurance of never exposing it, and that you will burn it, when God shall have given it the effect he intends for your spiritual profit, for which I would gladly sacrifice every thing; persuaded as I am of his designs in regard to you, both for your own sanctification, and that of others.

But at the same time I assure you that you will never attain thereto, except through much pain and labour, and in a path widely different from your expectation. Nor will you be surprised thereat, if once convinced that God does not establish his great works but upon NOTHING. It seems that he destroys in order to build, to the end that the temple, which he designs for himself, having been built up with great pomp and magnificence, yet only built by the hands

of men, may be in such manner destroyed as that there may not remain *one stone left upon another*. Such destruction must serve for the Holy Ghost, to form a temple which shall be built by his own power only.

Oh that you could comprehend the depth of this mystery, and conceive the secrets of the conduct of God, *revealed babes, but hid from the wise and great* of the world, who manage themselves to be the Lord's counsellors, capable of penetrating the depth of his ways; and to have attained that divine wisdom, which is *hid from the eyes of all living*, that is of such as live to themselves and in their own works; and *kept close from the fowls of the air*, that is from those who, by the vivacity of their intellects, and the force of their elevation, mount up to heaven; and think to fathom the height, depth, breadth and extent of God.

This divine wisdom is unknown even to those who pass in the world for persons of extraordinary illumination and knowledge. To whom then is it known, and who can tell us any tidings thereof? *Destruction and death* assure us that they have heard with their ears of its fame and renown. 'Tis then in dying to every thing, and to all regards thereto in order to pass into God, and to live in him alone, one has any comprehension of true wisdom. Oh, how little are her ways known and the conduct she holds over her choicest servants! Scarce does one discover any thing thereof, but, surprised at the difference between the truth thus discovered and the ideas formerly entertained, such an one cries out with St. Paul, "O the depth of the knowledge and wisdom of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

He judges not of things as men do, who *call good evil and evil good*, and who regard as great righteousness things abhorred in his sight, and which (according to the prophet) are in his estimation but *as filthy rags*. These principles of self-righteousness, like those of the Pharisees, will meet

with nothing from him but wrath, far from being the objects of his love, and subjects of his recompenses: as he assures us himself; "Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Which of us has a righteousness that comes up any thing near to that of the Pharisees, and in doing less good has not more ostentation? Which of us is not pleased to be righteous in our own eyes, and in the eyes of others, and to think that sufficient to satisfy God? Yet we may see the indignation which our Lord, as well as his forerunner, manifested against such kind of persons. He who was the perfect model of tenderness and meekness, yet such as was deep and came from the heart, not that affected meekness, which under the form of a *dove* hides the heart of a *hawk*, constantly treated those self-righteous persons with austerity, and seemed to dishonour them before men. The colours in which he represented them appeared strange, while he looked on sinners with mercy and love: protesting that for them only he was come, *that it was the sick who needed a physician*; and though the Saviour of Israel, he came only *to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel*.

Oh thou source of love! thou dost indeed seem so jealous of the salvation thou hast purchased, that thou dost prefer the sinner to the righteous! the poor sinner, who, seeing in himself nothing but misery, is as it were constrained to hate himself. He casts himself, as otherwise lost, into the arms of his Saviour, plunges with faith in the sacred bath of his blood, and comes forth "white as wool," and full of love for him who, alone able to remedy his maladies, has had the charity to do it. The more enormous his crimes have been, the more he loves him; and his acknowledgments are so much the stronger as the debts remitted have been the greater; while the righteous, buoyed up by his good works as he presumes, seems to hold his salva-

tion in his own hands, and regards heaven as a recompense due to his merits. He exclaims against all sinners, in the bitterness of his zeal, represents the gates of mercy as barred to them, and heaven as a place to which they have no right: while he thinks an admission into it the more secure for himself, as he appears in a degree to have merited it. His Saviour is in a manner useless to him, he is so laden with his own merits! While those sinners, divested of every thing, fly on the wings of faith and love into the arms of their Saviour, who freely gives them what he has infinitely merited for them.

In the former, how much love for themselves, and how little for God! They bless and admire themselves in their works of righteousness, which they esteem as the cause of their happiness. These works are no sooner exposed to the sun of righteousness, than it discovers all their iniquity, and makes them appear as sordid as the mischief which they do to the heart.

St. Paul assures us that the faith of Abraham was imputed to him for righteousness. This is truly beautiful; for it is certain that that eminent Patriarch did all his actions with very great righteousness; and yet he did not see them as such. Being entirely free from self love, and a fondness for his own actions, his faith was founded on the salvation to come by Christ. He hoped in him, even against hope itself; and this was imputed to him for righteousness, viz. a righteousness pure, simple and genuine, merited for him by Christ, not a righteousness wrought by himself, and regarded as of himself.

All this may appear a digression, very remote from the subject I proposed at first to write upon; but it will help to guide you insensibly to it, and let you see that God takes, to accomplish his works, either in converted sinners, whose past iniquity may serve for a counterpoise to their elevation; or persons in whom he totally overturns their self-righteous-

ness, and the temple raised by the hands of men, works built on the moving sand instead of being founded on the living stone Jesus Christ. All that he came into the world to establish, is effected by the destruction of the very things he designs to build. He established his Church in a way that seemed to destroy it. What a strange way is it of establishing a law, and giving it a sanction, when the legislator is, by the chief teachers and powers of the world, condemned as an infamous malefactor, to a reproachful and cruel death ! Oh, were it but enough known how opposite to the designs of God self-righteousness is, it would teach us to distrust resting on ourselves alone, and be an endless subject of humiliation.

This being premised, it will be less difficult for you to conceive the designs of God in the favours he has conferred on the most miserable of creatures ; favours of which I had rendered myself very unworthy. From the supreme love of his own power, and a just jealousy of the honours, which men pay to other men, on account of the good which he places in them, it has pleased him to take the most unworthy object that ever existed, to make known that his graces are the effects of his will, not the fruit of our merits ; that it is the property of his wisdom to destroy what is proudly built, and to build what is destroyed, to make use of "weak things to confound the mighty," and to employ in his service such as appear vile and contemptible.

This he does in a manner so astonishing, as to render them the objects of the scorn and contempt of all creatures. It is not to procure them the approbation of men, that he makes use of them for the salvation of those same men ; but to render them the objects of their dislike, and the butt of their insults ; as you will see in the narrative of the life which you have ordered me to write.



## CHAPTER II.

*Her birth. At four years of age she goes with the Dutchess of Montbazon to the Benedictines.*

I WAS born, as I have been told, on Easter eve, the 13th of April 1648.\* My parents made a high profession of piety, especially my father, who inherited it from his ancestors; for in his family they reckoned almost as many saints as persons who composed it. I had no sooner received life than I had like to have lost it, and to die without baptism. I was carried to a nurse. When there, my father received the news that I was dead; at which he was much afflicted: but soon after, a messenger arrived, informing him that I had given some signs of life. He then took a priest, and brought him to me himself; but on his arrival he was told that the sign of life I had given was only an expiring sigh, and that I was absolutely dead. The priest returned, and my father also, in the utmost distress.

This held so long, that, should I tell it, it would appear incredible. Oh my God, it seems to me as if thou didst permit a conduct so singular toward me, in order that I should become the more sensible of the greatness of thy providence over me, and of my being indebted to thee alone

\* She was born at Montargis, a town in the province of Orleanois, fifty miles south from Paris. Her name was JEANE MARIE BOUVIERS DE LA MOTHE GUION, taken from several of her family, to preserve their memory, according to the custom of people of quality in that country.

Although she has taken no notice of her rank in her writings, yet the French Editor in his Preface, mentions that she obtained the title of Lady by her marriage, her husband being one of the Lords of the canal of Briare, which supplies a communication between two of the finest rivers in France, viz. the Seine which runs by Paris, Rouen, &c. into the English channel; and the Loire which runs by the cities of Nivers, Orleans, Blois, Tours, Angers and Nantz into the bay of Biscay. The title thus obtained she continued to bear to the end of her days. In regard to her father, she does not tell us his name, nor give any other account of him than of his piety and virtues.

for my salvation, and not to the efforts of any creature. Had I died then, I had perhaps never known or loved thee;\* and this heart, created for thee alone, might have been separated from thee forever. It is all owing to thy goodness, O thou, who art the sovereign felicity! that there now remains to me the consolation of having known thee, of having loved, sought, and followed thee, of having sacrificed myself in the strength of pure love to thee, with every thing appertaining to me: that I have, with a heart full of gratitude, sought thy honour, glory, interests, and not my own: and that I have loved all the chastisements which thy justice has directed and thy hand inflicted.

These alternatives of death and life were signal omens of what was to befall me; one while dying by sin, another while living by grace. Death and life seemed to combat; but life proved victorious. Oh, might I but hope that, in the conclusion, life will forever be victorious over death! Doubtless it will be so, if thou alone live in me, oh my God, who art at present my only life and my only love.

At the age of two years and a half, I was, for a short time, placed with the Ursulines. After my return home, my mother, who was not very fond of girls, neglected me too much, leaving me to the care of women still more negligent. In the mean time God protected me, else I had perished: for through my extreme vivacity I was frequently falling into one accident or other.

I was four years of age when the Dutchess of Montbason came to the Benedictines.† As there was a great friend-

\* She here adverts to the commonly received opinion in the Romish church, that infants dying without baptism are not saved. From this, and several other opinions almost universally held in the church of Rome, she seems occasionally to break forth, in the course of her writings.

† Ursulines, Benedictines, Dominicans, &c. are, among Roman Catholics, religious orders, so called in honour of St. Ursula, Benedict, Dominic, &c. The house of the Ursulines was a Nunnery, and beside that, a Seminary, for the tuition or education of young maids; in which office some of the Nuns were employed.

ship between her and my father, she entreated him to place me there, because I greatly diverted her. Here I saw none but good examples : and as I was naturally disposed to goodness, I followed it when I found nobody to turn me from it. Young as I was, I loved to hear of God, to be at church, and drest in the habit of a little nun.

One day imagining the frightful notions, which had been given me of hell, were only designed to intimidate me, because I was active and sprightly ; I saw that night in a dream, so frightful an image of hell, that though but a mere child, I never forgot it. It appeared to me a place of horrible darkness, where souls were tormented : my place was shewn me there, which made me weep bitterly, and cry out, "Oh ! my God, if thou wouldst in mercy, only grant me some days of life, never more would I offend thee." Soon after this, I wanted to go privately to confession, but being so little, the mistress of the boarders went with me. She was surprised to hear me begin with accusing myself of having entertained thoughts contrary to the faith. The confessor, smiling, asked me what they were ? I told him that "I had doubted of hell ; but now doubted of it no longer." After confession, I felt in myself an inexpressible fervour to that degree that I even wished to endure martyrdom. The good girls of the house, to see how far this rising fervency would carry me, bade me prepare myself for it. I then prayed to God with great ardour ; which being both new and delightful, was an assurance of his love : it gave me courage, and made me more eagerly desire that martyrdom might be granted me, that thereby I might go to see my God. The girls had no sooner set me on my knees, on a cloth that was spread, but, seeing a great cutlass lifted up behind me, I cried out, "I was not at liberty to die without my father's consent." They said then, "I should be no martyr ; and that I only made that excuse to free myself from it." And indeed it was true. However, I was after

it much afflicted. My consolation left me ; and something reproached me that I wanted courage to go immediately to heaven.

From this house I was soon after removed on account of my great and frequent indispositions. Being now returned home, my mother, little regarding me, left me to the care of domestics. From them I could learn nothing but evil, and contract a familiarity with it : for such was my disposition, that good or evil examples attracted me. When I saw good done, I did it, and thought not once about any thing contrary ; but when I saw evil done I was too prone to imitation, and to forget the good. My brother being the great darling of my mother, nothing in me could she see but faults, and yet omitted the proper care to reform them. Being too much left to myself, I was exposed to a multitude of dangers. What defects or wrong habits I had, were such as would easily have been remedied, had I been under any proper care. I do not remember that at that time I did amiss in any thing, except in saying a number of pretty little things, as I thought, to divert those about me : but by keeping myself, as much as possible, at a distance from my mother, I took pernicious liberties, and contracted bad habits. One day my father caught me at play with some children in the street, in such a way as ill suited my rank and quality : and so much was he moved at the sight, as he tenderly loved me, that without saying a word to any body, he immediately took me to the Ursulines.

## CHAPTER III.

*Good education under the care of an elder sister. Her interview, at her father's house, with the Queen of England, consort to James II. She falls into a sink, and is in danger of perishing. She goes with a nun of the order of St. Dominick into her convent. Bad treatment there. She returns home.*

I WAS then near seven years of age. In this house were two half sisters of mine, the one by my father, the other by my mother; for my parents had both been married before they were married to each other. My father recommended me to the care of his daughter, who I think was one of the most sensible and religious of her time, and the most proper to tutor young girls. This was for me, oh my God, an effect of thy providence and of thy love, and the first means of my salvation; for as she loved me much, her affection made her discover in me many good qualities, which in thy great goodness thou hadst implanted in me. She endeavoured to cultivate them. I believe that if I had continued in such wise and good hands, I should have had as much virtue, as I have since contracted of vicious habits.

This good sister employed her time in instructing me in piety, and in such branches of learning as were suitable to my age and capacity. She had good talents and improved them well, was frequent in prayer, and her faith seemed strong and pure. She denied herself of every other satisfaction to be with me, and to instruct me: nay, such was her affection for me, that it made her find, as she told me, more pleasure with me than any where else.

If I made her agreeable answers, more from chance than judgment, she thought herself well paid for all her labour. In short, under her care I soon became mistress of most things suitable for me, insomuch that many grown persons, of some rank and figure, could not have answered to the things which I did.

As my father often sent for me home to see me, one time I found the Queen of England there. I was then near eight years of age. My father told the Queen's confessor, that if he wanted a little amusement, he might entertain himself with me, and propound some questions to me. He tried me with several very difficult ones, to which I returned such correct answers, that he carried me to the Queen, and said to her, "Your Majesty must have some diversion with this child." She also tried me; and being well pleased with my lively answers, and my manners, that she demanded me of my father with no small importunity, assuring him that she would take particular care of me; designing me for maid of honour to the princess. But my father resisted so far as to disoblige her. Doubtless it was God who caused this refusal, and thereby turned off the stroke which might have probably intercepted my salvation: for being so weak as I was, how should I have withstood the temptations and distractions of a court.

I went back to the Ursulines, where my good sister continued her affection. But as she was not the mistress of the boarders, and as I was obliged sometimes to go along with them, I contracted bad habits; I became addicted to lying, peevishness and indevotion, passing whole days, without thinking of God; though he watched continually over me, as the sequel will manifest. I did not remain long under the power of such vicious habits; for my sister's care recovered me. I loved much to hear of God, was not weary at church, loved to pray, had tenderness for the poor, and a natural dislike for persons whose doctrine was judged unsound, having sucked in with my milk, the purity of the faith: and God has always continued to me that grace, in the midst of my greatest infidelities.

There was at the end of the garden a little chapel, dedicated to the child Jesus. Thither I betook myself for devotion; and, for some time carrying my breakfast there every

morning, hid it all behind his image; for I was so much a child, that I thought I made a considerable sacrifice in depriving myself of it. Being also delicate in the choice of my food, I wished to mortify myself; but found self-love still too prevalent, to submit to such mortification. After this, when they were cleaning out the chapel, they found behind the image what I had left there, and presently guessed that it was me, as they had seen me every day going thither: and God, who lets nothing pass without a recompense, rewarded me for this little infantine devotion.

One day, my companions, who were large girls, to divert themselves, went to dance over a deep pit, which served as a sink to carry off the filth from the kitchen. It was deep, and covered with boards for fear of accident. When they retired I wanted imitate them; but the boards broke under me, and I fell into the frightful gutter, yet hanging by a little piece of timber, in such manner, that I was plunged in the filth, without being stifled with it: a figure of the inward state which I had to undergo, when in the horrible pit, which I was unable of myself to get out of. But God, in his goodness preserved me in each, and brought me out of them; defiled indeed for a time, but not destroyed! I was at the gates of death, and yet death was not permitted to have any power over me. What support had the little stick been on which I rested, if the adorable hand of God had not, at this critical juncture sustained me? But for that, undoubtedly it had soon broken. I cried out with all my might. The boarders, who saw me fall, instead of running to my help, went to alarm the sisters of the house. These sisters, concluding I was killed, ran to church to apprise my sister, who was then at prayers. She immediately prayed for me, and (after having invoked the blessed virgin) came to me much frightened: but was not a little surprised, when she saw me, in the mire and filth, seated as on an easy chair. She admired that goodness of God, which had supported me in such a miraculous manner.



I continued some time longer with my sister, where I retained the love and fear of God. My life was easy; I was educated agreeably with her. I improved much in the time that I had my health; for very often I was sick, and seized with maladies as sudden as uncommon: in evening well, and in the morning swelled and full of bluish marks, symptoms of a fever which soon followed. At nine years of age, I was taken with so violent a fit of throwing up blood, that they thought I was going to die; and by it I was very much weakened.

A little before this severe fit, my other sister, became jealous, wanting to have me in her turn. Though she led a good life, yet she had not a talent for the education of children, I may say, that this was the period of my happiness in this house. At first she caressed me much; but all her caresses made no impression on my heart. My other sister did more with a look, than she with either caresses or threatenings. As she saw that I loved her not so well as the other, she changed her fondling to rigorous treatment. She would not allow me to speak to my other sister; and when she knew I had spoken to her, she got me corrected, or else beat me herself. I could no longer hold out against such severe usage, and therefore requited with ingratitude all the favours of my paternal sister, going no more to see her; which yet did not hinder her from giving me marks of her usual goodness, in the great malady I mentioned above. She kindly construed my ingratitude to be rather owing to my fear of chastisement, than any bad inclination: and indeed I think that was the only time that this fear acted with so much force on me.

My father, being informed of all that passed, took me home again. I was at that time near ten years of age. I stayed only a little while at home; for a nun of the order of St. Dominic, of a great family, and an intimate friend of my father's, solicited him to place me in her convent, of which

she was the prioress, promising she would take care of me herself, and make me lodge in her own chamber; for this lady had conceived a great affection for me. But she was so taken up with her community, in which many troublesome affairs fell out, that she was not at liberty to take much care of me. Here I had the chicken-pox, which made me keep my bed three weeks, in which I had very bad attendance, though my father and mother thought I was under excellent care. The ladies of the house had such a dread of the small-pox, as they imagined mine to be, that they durst not come near me. I passed almost all the time without seeing any body but a lay-sister, who only brought me my allowance of diet at the set hours, and then immediately went off again. I providentially found a Bible in my chamber, and having both a fondness for reading and a happy memory, I spent whole days in reading it from morning to night, and learned entirely the historical part. Yet I was really very unhappy in this house: for the other boarders, being older, plagued me with very grievous persecutions. I was so much neglected, as to meat and drink, that I fell away, and became quite emaciated. Several other crosses I had, which were hard enough for me to bear,

## CHAPTER IV.

*Her elder brother being her mother's favourite, she, little regarded, undergoes great hardships. She grows tall and beautiful. Several suitors, asking her father's consent for her, are refused. A report given her of a relation, going on a mission to the Indies, affects her much. The turn of her heart to God, and diligent application to every duty. She conceives an eager desire to be a nun.*

AFTER having been here about eight months, my father took me home again. My mother kept me more with her, having a higher regard for me than before; yet she still preferred my brother, which was so visible, that every one spoke of it with dislike; for when I was sick, and met with any thing I liked, he demanded it; it was then taken from me, and given to him, though he was in perfect health. He was continually giving me new vexations. One day he made me mount upon the top of the coach; when he had done that, he threw me down on the ground; and by the fall I was bruised. At other times he beat me; but whatever he did, however wrong, was winked at, or had the most favourable construction put upon it. This conduct soured my temper: I had little disposition to do good, saying, "I was never the better for it." It was not then for thee alone, oh my God, that I did good; since I ceased to do it when it met not with such a reception from others as I wanted. Had I known how to make a right use of this crucifying conduct which thou held over me, I should have made a good progress. Far from turning me out of the way, it would have made me turn more entirely to thee. With jealous eyes I looked on my brother, seeing the wide difference made between him and me. Whatever he did, he always did well; but the blame of all fell on me. My half-sisters, made their court to my mother, by caressing him, and abusing me. It is true, I was bad; I was relapsed

into my former faults of lying and peevishness. But with all these faults, I was very tender and charitable to the poor, prayed to God assiduously, loved to hear any speak of him, and to read good books.

I doubt not, Sir, but such a long train of inconsistencies will surprise you; but what follows will surprise you much more, when you will see this manner of acting gather strength with age; and that reason, far from correcting such irrational conduct, served only to give more force and latitude to my sins. It seemed, oh my God, as if thou poured out thy graces on me, in proportion as my ingratitude increased. There passed in me what passes in the siege of cities. Thy grace besieged my heart, and I thought of nothing but of defending it against thy attacks, redoubling every day my iniquities, to hinder thee from taking it. When it seemed as if thou wast going to be victorious, I erected counter-batteries, and threw up ramparts to stop thy goodness, and repel the force of thy favours.

I cannot hear with patience any one who says, "We are not free to resist grace." I have made too long and fatal an experience of my liberty. I closed up all the avenues of my heart, that I might not so much as hear that secret voice of God, which was calling me to himself. I have indeed from my tenderest youth, passed through a series of grievances, either by maladies or by persecutions. The girl to whose care my mother left me, in dressing my head used to beat me, and did not make me turn it but with rage and blows. Every thing seemed in concert to punish me. My father knew nothing of all this; for his love to me was such that he would not have suffered it. I loved him much, but at the same time I feared him, so that I told him nothing of it. My mother was often teasing him with complaints of me, to which he made no other reply than, "There are twelve hours in the day; she will grow wiser." This rigorous proceeding was not the worse for my soul, though it

soured my temper, which was otherwise mild and easy. But what caused my greatest hurt was, that not being able to endure those who treated me ill, I chose to be among those who caressed me, in order to corrupt and spoil me.

My father, seeing I was now grown pretty tall, placed me in Lent among the Ursulines, to have my first communion at Easter, at which time I was to complete my eleventh year. And here my most dear sister, under whose inspection my father placed me, redoubled her cares to cause me to make the best preparation possible for this act of devotion. I thought now of giving myself to God in good earnest. I often felt a combat between my good inclinations and my bad habits. I even did some penances. As I was almost always with my sister, and as the boarders in her class, which was the first, were very reasonable and civil, I became such also whilst I was among them. It had been violence to educate me badly; for my very nature was strongly disposed to goodness, and I loved every thing that tended thereto. Easily won with mildness, I did with pleasure whatever my good sister desired. At length Easter arrived, and I made my first communion (which was preceded by a general confession) with much joy and devotion. And in this house I staid till Whitsuntide. But as my other sister was mistress of the second class, she demanded me in her week, to be with her in that class. Her manners, so opposite to the other's, made me relax my former piety. I felt no more that new and delightful ardour which had seized my heart at my first communion. Alas! it held but a short time; for my faults and failings were soon reiterated, and drew me off from the care and duties of religion.

As I now grew very tall for my age, and more to my mother's liking than heretofore, she took care to deck and dress me out, to make me see company, and to take me abroad with her. She took an inordinate pride in this beau-

ty, which God had put on me only to bless and praise him, which yet has been to me a source of pride and vanity. Several suitors offered to me. But as I was not yet twelve years of age, my father would not listen to any proposals. I loved reading much, and shut myself up all alone every day to read without interruption.

What proved effectual to gain me over entirely to my God at least for a time, was, that a nephew of my father's, passed by our house going with the bishop of —, to Cochin-china. I happened at that time to be gone a walking with my companions, which I seldom did. At my return he was gone. They gave me an account of his sanctity, and the things he had said. I was so touched therewith, that I was overcome with sorrow. I cried all the rest of the day and of the night. Early in the morning, I went in great distress to seek my confessor. I said to him, "What my father, am I the only person in our family to be lost? Alas! help me in my salvation." He was greatly surprised to see me so much afflicted, and comforted me in the best manner he could, not thinking me so bad as I was; for in the midst of my backsliding I was docile, punctual in obedience, careful to confess often; and since I went to him, my life was more regular. O thou God of love, how often hast thou knocked at the door of my heart! how often terrified me with appearances of sudden death! Yet all these only made a transient impression. I presently returned again to my infidelities; but this time thou didst take me, and I may say quite carried off my heart. Alas, what grief I now sustained for having displeased thee! what regrets, what exclamations what tears of sorrow! Who would have thought, to see me, but that my conversion would have lasted as long as my life? Why didst thou not, oh my God, utterly take this heart to thyself, when I gave it to thee so fully, or if thou didst take it then, oh why didst thou let it revolt again? it was not but that thou wast strong enough

to hold it ; but it seems to me that thou didst choose, in leaving me to myself, to cause thy mercy to shine more conspicuously ; and the extent of my iniquities to serve for a lasting monument of thy goodness.

I immediately applied myself to every part of my duty. I made a general confession with great compunction of heart. I frankly confessed all that I knew with torrents of tears. I became so changed, that I was scarce to be known. I would not for ever so much have made the least voluntary slip ; and they found not any matter for absolution when I confessed. I discovered the very smallest faults : and God did me the favour to enable me to conquer myself in many things. There were left only some remains of passion, which gave me some trouble to conquer : but as soon as I had, by means thereof, given any displeasure even to the domestics, I begged their pardon, in order to subdue at the same time my anger and my pride ; for anger is the daughter of pride. A person truly humbled suffers not any thing to put him in a rage. As it is pride which dies the last in the soul, so it is passion which is last destroyed in the outward conduct. A soul thoroughly annihilated, or dead to itself, finds nothing of rage left in itself.

There are persons, who, being much filled with the unction of grace and a delightful calm, at their entrance of the resigned path of light and love, think that pride and anger are entirely subdued ; but they are greatly mistaken. This they will readily discover, if they are heartily willing to examine two things ; first, if their nature is lively, warm and violent, (for I speak not of stupid tempers) they will find from time to time, that they make slips, in which trouble and emotion have some share ; and which even then are useful to humble and reform them. And when such humility is wrought, then rage is all lost and utterly destroyed. Moreover they will find that there often rises in them certain motions of anger, but the sweetness of grace holds



them back by a secret violence : they would easily transgress, if in any wise they gave way to these motions : there are persons who think themselves very mild because nothing thwarts them : it is not of such that I am speaking ; for the mildness which has never been put to the proof, is often only a mask of mildness. Those persons who, when unmolested appear saints, are no sooner exercised by vexing occurrences, than there starts up in them a strange number of faults, which they had thought to be dead, and which only lay dormant because nothing awaked them.

I followed my religious exercises. I shut myself up all the day to read and to pray. I gave all I had to the poor, taking even linen to their houses to make them necessaries. I taught them the catechism ; and when my parents dined abroad, I made them eat with me, and served them with great respect. I read the works of St. Francis de Sales\* and the life of Madame de Chantal. There I found that she made prayers. I begged of my confessor to teach me to make them ; and as he did not, I tried to make them myself as well as I could ; but without any success, as I then thought ; for I could imagine nothing, and yet persuaded myself, that prayer could not be made without forming to myself certain ideas and reasoning much. This difficulty gave me no small trouble, and that for a long time. I was nevertheless very assiduous therein, and prayed earnestly to God to give me the gift of prayer. All that I saw written in the life of M. de Chantal charmed me ; and I was so much a child, that I thought I ought to do every thing that I saw in it. All the vows she had made I made also ; as that, of ever aiming at the highest perfection

\* St. Francis de Sales she several times mentions with great esteem. A summary of his life is inserted in the Appendix.

M. de Chantal was the eldest daughter of Francis de Sales. Her life was written in French, but as we have not seen it, we know no more respecting her, but that she was called Baroness of Chantal, and was much esteemed for her piety.

and of doing the will of God in every thing. I was not yet twelve years of age : nevertheless I took the discipline according to my strength.\*

After this, I turned all my thoughts to become a nun, very often going to *the visitation*; for the love which I had for St. Francis de Sales did not permit me to think of any other community than that, of which he was the founder. I frequently went to beg the nuns there to receive me into their convent. Often I stole out of my father's house to go thither, and repeatedly solicited them to consent to my admission. But though it was what they eagerly desired, even as a temporal advantage ; yet they never durst let me enter their house, as they very much feared my father, whose fondness for me they were no strangers to. There was then at that house a niece of my father's, to whom I am under great obligations. Fortune had not been very favourable to her father, and had thereby reduced her in some sort to depend on mine, to whom she discovered my inclination ; who, though he would not for any thing in the world have hindered a right vocation, yet could not hear of my design without shedding tears. But as he happened at this time to be abroad, my cousin went to my confessor, to desire him to forbid my going to *the visitation*. He durst not however, do it plainly, for fear of drawing on himself the resentment of that community ; for they already looked upon me as their's. Yet I still wanted to be a nun, and importuned my mother excessively to take me to that house ; but she would not do it, for fear of grieving my father, who was yet absent, and she still referred me to his return. As I saw that I could not obtain from her what I desired, I counterfeited her hand writing, and forged a letter in which she besought those ladies to receive me ; excusing herself

\* This discipline, in the Romish church, is for people to scourge themselves for their sins. This, and many other bodily austerities, she afterwards voluntarily underwent, of which notice will be taken in the proper place.

from coming with me on account of her illness : but the prioress, who was a relation of my mother's, and well acquainted with her hand, at once detected the forgery.

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#### CHAPTER V.

*She attends her father in his sickness. Character of her mother. An excursion into the country revives her youthful vanity. It also gives her a fondness for romances. Advantages of inward prayer, and the fatal harm sustained through its neglect.*

No sooner was my father returned home, than he fell into a violent distemper. My mother was at the same time indisposed in another part of the house. I was then all alone with him, ready to render him every kind of service I was capable of, and to give him all the dutiful marks of a most sincere affection : and I do not doubt but my assiduity was very agreeable to him. I went, unperceived by him, to perform the most menial offices ; taking the time for it when the servants were not at hand ; as well to mortify myself, as to pay due honour to what Jesus Christ said, that “ he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” When he made me read by him, I read with such a heartfelt devotion that he was surprised at it. I remembered the instructions my sister had given me, and the ejaculatory prayers and praises I had learned from her. She had taught me to praise thee, oh my God, in all thy works. All that I saw called upon me to render thee that homage. If it rained, I wished all the drops of water to be changed into love and praises. My heart was nourished insensibly with thy love ; and my spirit was incessantly engrossed with the remembrance of thee. I seemed to join and partake in all the good that was done in the world, and could have wished to have the united hearts of all men to love thee. This habit rooted itself so strongly in me, that I retained it through all my greatest inconstancies.

My cousin, before mentioned, helped not a little to support me in these good sentiments : for I was often with her, and loved her, as she took great care of me, and treated me with much gentleness. Her fortune being neither equal to her birth nor her virtue, she did with charity and affection what her condition obliged her to. My mother grew jealous, fearing I should love my cousin too well, and herself too little. She who had left me in my young years to the care of her maids, and since that to my own, only enquiring if I was in the house, and troubling herself no further, now demanded that I should always stay with her ; and never suffered me to be with my cousin but with very great reluctance. My cousin fell sick ; she took that occasion to send her home, which was to me a very afflicting stroke, both for nature and for grace.

Though my mother acted thus, she was a very virtuous woman. But God permitted it for my exercise. She was one of the most charitable women of her age. She not only gave away the surplus, but even the necessaries of the house. Never were the needy neglected by her. Never did the wretched come to her without finding succour. She furnished poor workmen wherewith to support their labour, and poor tradesmen wherewith to supply their shops. From her I think I inherited my charity and love for the poor : For God did me the favour to succeed her in that holy exercise. There was not one in the town or its environs, who did not praise her for this great virtue. She has sometimes given to the last pistole in the house ; and yet so great was her economy that she did not sink or fail in her trust. Her faith was lively, and her external devotion very great. She wanted nothing but a director who might have drawn her into the inward exercise of religion ; without which all virtues are but weak and languishing.

My mother's only care about me had been all along to have me in the house ; which indeed is one material point

for a girl. And this habit of being so constantly kept within, proved of great service to me after my marriage. Though it might have been much better for me had she kept me more in her own apartment with an agreeable freedom ; and enquired oftener what part of the house I was in.

After my cousin left me, I continued for some time in those sentiments of piety I have mentioned. One favour which God-granted me, was, so great a readiness to forgive injuries that my confessor was surprised at it ; as he knew that some young ladies had, out of envy, spoken very unhandsomely of me ; and that I spoke well of them as occasion offered. I was seized with a tertian ague, which lasted four months, in which I suffered much ; yet I was enabled to suffer with much resignation and patience. In this frame of mind and manner of life, I persevered, so long as I continued the practice of prayer.

About eleven or twelve months after, we went to pass some days in the country. My father took along with us one of his near relations, who was a very accomplished young gentleman. He had a great desire to marry me ; but my father, who had resolved not to give me to any near kinsman, on account of the difficulty of obtaining dispensations, put him off, without alledging any false or frivolous reasons for it. As this young gentleman was very devout, and every day said the office of the Virgin, I said it with him ; and to have time for it left off prayer, which was to me the first inlet of evils. Yet I kept up, for a long time, some share of the spirit of piety ; for I went to seek out the little shepherdesses, to instruct and teach them their religious duties ; yet this spirit gradually decayed, not being nourished by prayer. Hereby I became cold toward God ; all my old faults revived ; to which I added a prolixious increase of vanity. The love I began to have for myself extinguished what remained in me of the love of God.

I did not immediately leave off prayer, without asking my confessor's leave; alledging that I thought it better to say the office of the virgin every day, than to practice prayer; as I had not time for both. This was a stratagem of the enemy to draw me from God, and to fasten me insensibly in the snares he was laying for me. My confessor was easy in the matter; not a man of prayer, he gave his consent, to my great hurt.

Oh, my God, were but the value of prayer known, the great advantage which accrues to the soul from conversing with thee, and what consequence it is of to salvation, every one would be assiduous in it. It is a strong hold into which the enemy cannot enter. He may attack it, besiege it, make a noise about its walls; but while we are faithful, and do not quit it, he can do us no harm. It is alike requisite to dictate to children the necessity of prayer as of their salvation; but alas! unhappily, it is thought sufficient to tell them that there is a heaven and a hell; that they must endeavour to avoid the latter and attain the former; and yet they are not taught the shortest and easiest way of arriving at it. The way to heaven is prayer; but a prayer of the heart, which every one is capable of, and not of reasonings, which are the fruits of study, or exercise of the imagination, which in filling the mind with wandering objects, rarely settle it; and instead of warming the heart with love to God, leave it cold and languishing. Oh, poor people, ignorant and carnal minds, children without reason and knowledge; dull or hard hearts which can retain nothing, come to the practice of prayer, and ye will become wise. Oh ye men who are great, wise and rich, have ye not, (great as ye are) a heart capable of loving what is proper for you, and of hating what is destructive? Love the sovereign good, hate the sovereign evil, and ye will be truly wise. When ye love any one, do ye know the reasons of love and its definitions? No, certainly; ye love because your heart is made to love

what it thinks lovely. Is there any thing more lovely than God? Ye know that he has created you, and has died for you: but if these reasons are not sufficient, which of you has not some necessity, some trouble, or some disgrace? Which of you does not know how to tell his malady, and beg a remedy? Come then to this fountain of all good. Without complaining to weak and impotent creatures, who cannot help you, come to prayer; to lay before God your troubles, to beg his grace, and above all to love him. No one can exempt himself from loving; for no one can live without a heart, nor the heart without love.

Why should any amuse themselves, in seeking reasons for loving Love itself? Let us love without reasoning about it; and we shall find ourselves filled with love, before the others have learned the reasons which induce to it. Taste of love, and ye will be wiser in it than the most skilful philosophers. In love, as in every thing else, experience instructs better than reason. Come then, drink at this fountain of living waters, instead of the broken cisterns of the creature, which far from allaying your thirst, only tend to augment it, and to render you never satisfied. Did you drink at this fountain, you would not seek elsewhere for any thing to quench your thirst; for while you still continue to draw from this well, you will have no more thirst after the world; but if you quit it, alas! the enemy has the ascendant; he will give you of his poisoned waters; which, in making you taste an apparent sweetness, will take from you your life.

This was what I did, when I left off prayer. I became as a vineyard exposed to pillage, whose hedges torn down, give liberty to all the passengers to ravage it. I began to seek in the creature what I had found in God. And thou, oh my God, didst leave me to myself, because I left thee first; and wast pleased, in permitting me to sink into the horrible pit, to make me feel the necessity I was in, of ap-

proaching to thee in prayer. Thou hast said, that thou wilt destroy those adulterous souls who depart from thee. Alas ! their departure alone causes their destruction ; since, in departing from thee, the Sun of Righteousness, they enter into the region of darkness and the shadow of death, from whence they would never rise again, if thou didst not revisit them : if thou didst not by thy divine light, come to illuminate their darkness, and by thy enlivening warmth, to melt their icy hearts, and restore them to life.

I fell then into the greatest of all misfortunes ; for I even wandered away from thee, oh my God, and thou didst gradually retire from a heart which quitted thee : yet such is thy goodness, that it seemed as if thou hadst left me with regret ; and when this heart was desirous to return again unto thee, with what speed didst thou come to meet it. This experience, which I have had, shall be to me an everlasting testimony of thy kindness and my ingratitude.

I became still more passionate than I had ever been, as age gave more force to my passions. I was frequently guilty of lying ; I felt my heart corrupt and vain ; the spark of divine grace was almost extinguished in me, and I fell into a state of indifference and indevotion ; though I still kept up the outside appearance with a good deal of care ; and the habit I was in, of being at church with modesty, made me appear better than I was. Vanity, which had been excluded out of my heart, now resumed its seat there. I began to pass a good deal of my time before a looking-glass. I found so much pleasure in viewing myself in it, that I thought others were in the right who practised the same. Instead of making use of this exterior, which God had given me as a means of loving him the more, it became to me only the means of a vain complacency. All seemed to me to look beautiful in my person, but I saw not that it covered a polluted soul. This rendered me so vain, that I doubt whether any ever exceeded me therein.



The high esteem I had for myself, made me find faults in every one else of my own sex. I had no eyes but to see my own good qualities, and to discover the defects of others. I hid from myself my own faults, or if I remarked any, yet to me they appeared little, in comparison of others. I excused and even figured them to myself as perfections. Every idea I had of others and of myself was false. I loved reading, to excess, particularly romances; spending great part of the night as well as the day, therein. I was uneasy till I got to the end of them; and then had an insatiable desire for more of the like kind to read. Those books are strange inventions to destroy youth: for if they caused no other hurt than the loss of time, is not that too much? I was not, however, restrained, but rather encouraged to read them, under the fallacious pretext, that they taught one to speak well.

Meanwhile, thy abundant goodness, oh my God, engaged thee to seek me again. I was touched with lively sorrow and poured out floods of tears; afflicted to find myself in a condition so different from that which I had found in thy presence: but my tears were without effect, and my sorrows useless. I could not of myself, get out of this unhappy condition. I wished some hand as charitable as powerful, would have extricated me; but as for myself, I had not power to do it. I was, (like the prophet,) *in a deep abyss of mire*, which I could not get out of. I met with reprimands for being in it, but none kind enough to reach out a helping hand to free me from it: and when I tried vain efforts to get out, I only sunk the deeper. The fruitless essay made me feel my own impotence, and only rendered me more afflicted and miserable.

Oh, how much compassion has this sad experience given me for sinners, as it has brought me to see how it happens, that so few of them emerge from the miserable state into which they are fallen; because such as see it, only cry out

against their disorders, and frighten them with threats of future punishment. These cries and threats at first make some impression, and they make some weak efforts to amend: but, after having experienced their insufficiency, they gradually abate in their design; and lose their courage for trying any more. And all that men can say to them afterwards, is but lost labour, though one preach to them incessantly. When any for relief run to confess, the only true remedy for them is prayer; to present themselves before God, in the condition of criminals; and to beg of him the power to come out of this state; they would then soon be changed, and brought *out of the mire and clay*. But the devil has falsely persuaded the doctors and the wise men of the age, that, in order to pray, it is necessary first to be perfectly converted. Hence people are dissuaded from it, and hence there is rarely any conversion that is durable. Our enemy is outrageous only against prayer, and those that exercise it; because he knows it is the true means of taking from him his prey. Let us undergo all the austerities we will, he suffers us to do it, and neither persecutes those that enjoin them, nor those that practise them. But no sooner does one enter into a spiritual life, a life of prayer, but they must prepare for strange crosses. All manner of persecutions and contempts in this world are reserved for that life.

Miserable as the condition was, to which I was reduced by my infidelities, and the little succour I had from my confessor, I did not fail to say my vocal prayers every day, to confess pretty often, and to communicate every fortnight. Sometimes I went to church to weep, and to pray to the virgin to obtain my conversion. I loved to hear any speak of God, and was never fatigued with hearing them. When my father spoke of him, I was transported with joy; and when he and my mother went on any pilgrimage, and were to set off very early in the morning, either I did not go to

bed, that I might not be surprised with sleep, or hired the girls to wake me timely. My father then was always speaking of God; which, at such times, afforded me the highest satisfaction, and such as I preferred to all others. I also loved the poor, and was charitable to them at this very time. How strange may this seem to some, and how hard to reconcile things so opposite!

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

Having speedily passed over her childish years, chequered with the dangers incident to that age, in respect both of her person and her morals, her scene of life begins to appear more interesting.

Now blooming in youth, extolled for her beauty, admired by some, and envied by others, she becomes exposed (but for a short space) to the snares of the world, and her own vanity co-operating with them.

Soon, ah soon! she finds herself stopt in her career, snatched in her bloom, and involved in the miseries of a matrimonial state, not of her own choice, but imposed on her by that of her parents.

We are now about entering a chapter, the perusal of which may even strike the obdurate and insensible with some feelings of compassion for her early and sudden change; no longer at liberty to range in life, and look around it, in order to make a choice of what might be agreeable to her; but instead of that, chained down under ceaseless oppressions, without hope of freedom, where every thing was perpetually dark, sour and grating.

Her troubles, indeed, through the goodness of God to her, took the best turn, as they induced her to have recourse to him for his assistance to bear her hard lot: and to discharge every duty requisite in it: Yet, certainly, cruel is the conduct of parents, who, from sordid views, force their children for life into what is so opposite to their peace. Though the Father of Mercies often sanctifies troubles, yet he approves not of our *doing evil that good may come of it*, or, *committing sin that grace may abound*.

## CHAPTER VI.

*In obedience to her father, she enters with a heavy heart into a married state, in the sixteenth year of her age. She meets with great and daily mortifications, from the temper of her husband, (who was twenty-two years older than herself,) of his mother, and an unreasonable waiting-maid imposed on her by them. She lays aside romances and returns to her duties.*

AFTERWARDS we came to Paris, where my vanity increased. No cost was spared to make me appear to advantage. I was forward enough to shew myself and expose my pride, in making a parade of this vain beauty, wishing to be loved of every one and to love none. Several apparently advantageous offers of marriage were made for me ; but God unwilling to have me lost, did not permit them to succeed. My father found difficulties, which my all-wise Creator caused to arise for my salvation ; for had I married any of these persons, I should have been much exposed, and my vanity would have had the means of extending itself in a wider circle.

There was one person who had asked for me in order to marriage, for several years past, whom my father for family reasons, had always refused. His manners were opposite to my vanity. Nevertheless, a fear lest I should leave this country, and the affluent circumstances of this gentleman, induced my father, notwithstanding both his own and my mother's reluctance, to promise me to him ; which was done without consulting me in the case. They made me sign the marriage articles without letting me know what they were ; though I was well pleased with the thoughts of marriage, flattering myself with a hope of being thereby set at full liberty, and delivered from the rough treatment of my mother, which I drew upon myself by want of docility ; yet God ordered it far otherwise ; and the condition which

I found myself in afterwards, disappointed all my hopes; as I shall shew in the sequel.

How pleasing soever marriage was to my thoughts, I was all the time, after my being promised, and even long after my marriage, in extreme confusion, which arose from two causes : the first was, my natural modesty, which I did not lose. I had much reserve towards men. The other was my vanity ; for though the husband provided was a more advantageous match than I merited, yet I did not think him such : and the figure which the others made, who had offered to me before, was vastly more engaging. Their rank would have placed me in view ; and as I consulted, in these things, nothing but my vanity, whatever did not flatter that, was to me insupportable ; yet even this vanity was, I think, of some advantage to me ; for it hindered me from falling into such things as have been the ruin of families. I would not do any thing which, in the eye of the world, might render me culpable ; so strictly did I guard my exterior conduct. As I was modest at church, and had not been used to go abroad without my mother, and as the reputation of our house was great, I passed for virtuous.

I did not see my spouse elect (at Paris) till two or three days before our marriage. I caused masses to be said all the time after my being contracted, to know the will of God ; wishing to do it in this affair at least. Oh goodness of my God, to bear with me at this time, and allow me to pray to thee, with as much boldness as if I had been one of thy friends ; I who had rebelled against thee as thy greatest enemy.

The joy of our nuptials was universal through the town ; amidst this general rejoicing there appeared none sad but myself. I could neither laugh as others did, nor even eat ; so much was I depressed, though as yet I knew not the cause : but it was a foretaste which God gave me of what was to befall me. The remembrance of the desire I had of

being a nun came pouring in upon me. All who came to compliment me, the day after, could not forbear rallying me, because I wept bitterly. I answered them, "Alas! I had desired so much to be a nun; why then am I now married? And by what fatality has such a revolution befallen me?" No sooner was I at the house of my new spouse, than I perceived that it would be for me *a house of mourning*.

I was obliged here to change my conduct; for their manner of living was very different from that in my father's house. My mother-in-law, who had long been a widow, regarded nothing else but saving; whereas at my father's house they lived in a manner extremely noble. All there was set off in full view; all appeared elegant: and what my husband and mother-in-law called pride, and I called politeness, was observed there. I was very much surprised at this change; and so much the more, as my vanity wished to increase, rather than to be diminished.

At the time of my marriage I was little past fifteen years of age. My surprise increased greatly, when I saw I must lose what I had acquired with so much application. At my father's house we were obliged to behave in a genteel way, and to speak with propriety. There, all that I said was applauded. Here, they never hearkened to me but to contradict and find fault. If I spoke well, they said it was to give them a lesson: if any questions were started, at my father's, he encouraged me to speak freely on such occasions; here, if I told my sentiments, they said it was to enter into a dispute. They shamefully made me hold my tongue, and scolded me from morning till night.

I should have some difficulty to write you these things, which cannot be done without wounding charity, if you had not forbidden me to omit any one article, and if you had not positively enjoined me to lay open every thing, and to write down every particular. One thing further I request

before you proceed, which is, not to look at things on the side of the creature, which would make these persons appear worse than they were; for my mother-in-law had virtue, my husband had religion, and not any vice. It is requisite to look at every thing on the side of God, who permitted these things, only for my salvation, and because he would not have me lost. I had beside so much pride, that had any other conduct been held over me, I should have supported myself therein, and should perhaps not have turned myself on the side of God; as afterwards, by the oppression of a multitude of crosses, I was reduced to do.

To return to my subject, my mother-in-law conceived such an aversion to me, that in order to vex me she made me do the most disagreeable things; for her humour was so extraordinary, having never surmounted it in her youth, that she could hardly live with any body. Saying no other than vocal prayers, she did not see this kind of fault; or seeing it and not drawing strength from the spirit of prayer, she could not get the better of it; and it was a subject of pity; for she had both sense and merit. I was then made the victim of her humours. All her occupation was to thwart me continually, and she inspired her son with the like sentiments. They would make persons far below me take place above me. My mother, who was very tenacious of the point of honour, could not endure this: and when she heard of it from others (for I told her nothing of it) she chid me, thinking I did it, not knowing how to keep my rank; and that I had no spirit. I durst not tell her how it was with me; but I was almost ready to die with the agonies of grief and continual vexation. And what aggravated them all, was the remembrance of the persons who had offered suit to me, the difference of their humour and their manner of acting, the love they had for me, with their agreeableness and politeness. All this made my present situation very gloomy, and my burthen intolerable. My

mother-in-law upbraided me in regard to my family, and spoke to me incessantly to the disadvantage of my father and mother. I never went to see them, without having some bitter speeches to bear at my return.

On the other hand, my mother complained of me, that I did not come often enough to see her. She said I did not love her, that I was alienated from my own family, by being too much attached to that of my husband ; so that I had a great deal of heavy sufferings to undergo on both sides.

What still augmented my crosses was, that my mother related to my mother-in-law, the pains I cost her from my infancy ; after which, they reproached me, saying, *I was a changeling and an evil spirit*. My husband obliged me to stay all the day long in my mother-in-law's room, without any liberty of retiring into my own apartment, so that I had not a moment's respite to breathe a little. She was ever reflecting on me to every body, to lessen the affection and esteem which any had for me, galling me with the grossest affronts before the finest companies. This had not the effect she wanted ; for the more patiently they saw me bear it, the higher esteem they entertained for me.

Indeed, she found the secret of extinguishing my vivacity, and making me become like a stupid idiot ; so that some of my former acquaintance hardly knew me. Those who had not seen me before, said, " Is this the person famed for such an abundance of wit ? She cannot say two words. She is a fine image." I was not sixteen years old. I was so much intimidated, that I durst not go out without my mother-in-law, and in her presence I could not speak ; I knew not what I said : so much fear I had of putting her out of humour, and drawing some bitter speech on myself.

To complete my affliction, they presented me with a waiting-maid who was every thing with them. She kept me in sight like a governess, and treated me in a strange manner. For the most part I bore with patience these evils



which I had no way to avoid: but sometimes I let some hasty answer escape me, which was to me a source of grievous crosses, and violent reproaches, for a long time together. When I went out, the footman had orders to give an account of every thing I did. It was then I began to eat the bread of sorrow, and to mingle my drink with my tears. If I was at table, they did one thing or other to me which covered me with confusion. I had recourse to tears, and from thence had a double shame, the one for what they said to me, and the other for not being able to forbear weeping. I had nobody to tell my unhappiness to, who might share my grief, and help me to bear it. I had a mind to tell something of it to my mother; and that caused me so many new crosses, that I resolved to have no other confidant of my troubles than myself. It was not from any natural cruelty that my husband treated me thus; for he loved me passionately, but he was naturally warm and hasty. What my mother-in-law said to him continually irritated him.

It was in a condition so deplorable every way, oh my God, that I began to perceive the need I had of thy assistance: for this condition was so much the more perilous for me, because, meeting with none but admirers abroad, and such as flattered me to my hurt, it was to be feared lest in such tender years, amidst all the strange domestic crosses I had to bear, I should be seduced into irregularity. But thou, by thy goodness and the love thou bore me, gave it quite a different turn. By these redoubled strokes, thou drew me to thyself, and did by thy crosses, what thy caresses could not effect. Nay, even at the beginning of my marriage, thou made use of my natural pride, to keep me within the limits of my duty. I knew that a woman ought never to give the least suspicion to her husband, and I was so very guarded in that respect, that I often carried it even to excess, so far as to refuse my hand, to such as in politeness offered me theirs. There happened to me an adventure, which through

my carrying prudence too far, had like to have ruined me ; for things were taken contrary to their intent : But my husband was sensible of my innocence, and the falshood of the insinuations of my mother-in-law.

Such weighty crosses, made me return to God. I began to deplore the sins of my youth ; for since my marriage I had not committed any voluntarily : Yet I still had some sentiments of vanity remaining, which I wished not to have. However, my troubles now counterbalanced them. Moreover many of them appeared just, to the little light I then had ; for I was not yet illuminated to penetrate the essence of vanity : I fixed my thoughts only on its appearance. I tried to amend my life by penance, and by a general confession, the most exact that I ever yet had made. I quitted all my romances, for which I lately had such a fondness. (though some time before my marriage, my love for them had been damped by reading the gospel, with which I was much affected ; and as I discovered that it bore the stamp of truth, it created a distaste for all the other books ; they appeared only full of lies and deceit.) But I now put away even indifferent books, retaining only such as were profitable. I resumed the practice of prayer, and endeavoured to offend my God no more. I felt his love gradually recovering the ascendancy in my heart, and banishing every other. Yet I had still an intolerable vanity, and self-complacency, which has been my most grievous and obstinate sin.

My crosses redoubled every day. What rendered them more painful was, that my mother-in-law, not content with the bitter words, which she uttered against me, both in public and private, would break out in a passion about the smallest trifles, and scarcely be free from it, even for a fortnight together. I passed a part of my time in bewailing myself, when I could be alone ; and my grief became every day more bitter. I sometimes could not refrain from tears, when I saw girls, who were my domestics, and owed me

submission, treat me so ill. I did nevertheless what I could to subdue my temper, which has cost me not a little.

Such heavy blows so impaired the vivacity of my nature, that I became *like a lamb that is shearing*. I prayed to the Lord to assist me, and he was my refuge. As my age differed from theirs, (for my husband was twenty-two years older than myself) I saw well that there was no probability of changing their humours, which were fortified with years: I found that whatever I said was offensive, even things which others would have been pleased with. I knew not how to act. One day, weighed down with grief, about six months after I was married, being alone, I took a knife to cut out my tongue, in order not to be obliged to speak to persons, who only made me speak, to have fresh matter of rage against me. This extravagant operation I had effected, if God had not stopped me short, and made me see my folly. I prayed continually, I communicated, I wished even to become dumb, so simple and ignorant was I. Though I have had my share of crosses, I never found any so difficult to support, as that of perpetual contrariety, without relaxation; of doing all one can to please, without ever succeeding therein, but even still offending by the very means designed to oblige, and being kept with such persons, in a most severe confinement, from morning till night, without daring to quit them. I have found that great crosses overwhelm, and stifle all anger at once. But such a continual contrariety irritates and stirs up a sourness at the heart. It has such a strange effect, that it requires the utmost violence and self restraint not to break out into vexation and rage.

Such was my condition in marriage, rather that of a slave than of a free person. And for a new augmentation of my troubles, I perceived, four months after my marriage, that my husband was subject to the gout. This malady, caused me many crosses, both within and without. He had the gout twice this year, six weeks each time. Soon after, it

returned again ; and he had it still worse than before. He was so much plagued with it, that he came no more out of his room, nor often out of his bed, which he usually kept for several months. I carefully attended him, though so very young, and did not fail exerting myself to the utmost in my duty. But alas ! all this did not gain me their friendship. I had not even the consolation to know whether what I did was agreeable. I denied myself all the most innocent diversions, to continue with my husband ; and did whatever I thought would please him. Sometimes he suffered me quietly, and then I esteemed myself very happy ; but at other times it seemed insupportable. My particular friends said, “ I was of a fine age indeed, to be nurse to an invalid, and that it was a shameful thing that I did not set more value on my talents.” I answered them, “ since I had a husband, I ought to share his painful, as well as his pleasing circumstances.” Besides, my mother, instead of pitying me, reprimanded me sharply for my assiduity about my husband ; assuring me that I should render myself unhappy by it ; and that he would afterwards demand, as a duty, what I now did out of virtue. But, oh my God, how different were thy thoughts from theirs, what appeared *without* from what passed *within* ! My husband had that foible, that when any one said any thing to him against me, he flew into a passion at once. It was the conduct of Providence over me : for he was a man of reason and loved me much. When I was sick, he was inconsolable. I believe, had it not been for my mother-in-law, and the girl I have spoken of, I should have been very happy with him : for most men have their passions ; and it is the duty of a reasonable woman to bear them peaceably, without irritating them by cross replies.

These things thou hast ordered, oh my God, in such a manner in thy goodness, that I have since seen, it was necessary for making me die to my vain and haughty nature.

I should not have had power to destroy it myself, if thou hadst not accomplished it by an all-wise economy of thy Providence. I prayed for patience, with great earnestness ; nevertheless, some sallies of my natural liveliness escaped me, and vanquished the resolutions I had taken of being silent. This was doubtless permitted, that my self-love should not nourish itself with my patience : for a slip of a moment caused me months of humiliation, reproach and sorrow, and proved the occasion of new crosses.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*She discourses on the usefulness and necessity of sufferings. Her domestic troubles increase, on account of some great losses her husband meets with. Death of her good sister. She goes to her husband at Paris, where she falls dangerously ill.*

DURING the first year, I did not make a right use of my afflictions, in such manner as I should have done. I still had vanity. I sometimes lied, to excuse things to my husband and mother-in-law, because I strangely stood in awe of them. Sometimes I broke out into a rage, their conduct appeared so very unreasonable, and especially that most provoking treatment of the girl who served me. It appeared to me a thing unheard of, that they should take her part against me, however base and offensive her deportment. For as to my mother-in-law, her age and rank rendered her conduct more tolerable. But thou, oh my God, brought me to see things in a far different light. I found in thee reasons for suffering, which I had never found in the creature ; thou hast caused me to reap a benefit from it, of which I had yet no prospect. I came afterward to see in a clear light and with great joy, that this conduct, as unreasonable as it seemed, and as mortifying as it was, was

quite necessary for me ; for if I had been applauded by my husband and mother-in-law, as I was at my father's, my pride would have been intolerable. I had a fault common to many women, that I could not hear a beautiful woman praised, without finding some fault with her, artfully causing it to be remarked, in order to lessen the good which was said of her. This fault of mine continued long. It is the fruit of a gross and malignant pride, as well as that of extravagantly extolling any one.

About this time I gave birth to my first child ; which was a son. My vanity still continued. I was glad of being noticed with regard. And, far from avoiding the occasions thereof, I went to the public walks, though but seldom ; and when in the streets, I pulled off my mask out of vanity, and drew off my gloves to shew my hands. Could there be greater folly ? I sometimes also went to the ball, where I exposed my vanity in dancing.

There happened in the family an affair of great consequence in regard to our temporal concerns. The loss was very considerable. It cost me strange crosses for above a year, not that I regretted the losses which it caused. But I seemed to be the butt of all the ill humours of the family. It would require a volume to describe all that I suffered during this time. With what pleasure did I sacrifice these temporals ; and how often resign myself to have begged my bread, if God had so ordered it ! My mother-in-law was inconsolable. She bade me pray to God for these things ; but to me that was entirely impossible. Oh my dearest Lord ! never could I pray to thee about the world, or things of the world ; nor sully my sacred addresses to the Majesty on high, with the dirt of the earth : No, I rather wished to renounce it all, and every thing else, for the sake of thy love, and the enjoyment of thy presence in that kingdom, which is not of this world. I wholly sacrificed myself to thee, even earnestly begging thee rather to

reduce our family to want, than suffer it to offend thee. In my own mind I excused my mother-in-law, saying to myself, "If thou hadst taken the pains to accumulate and save like her, thou wouldst not be so indifferent at seeing so much lost. Thou enjoyest what cost thee nothing, and reapest what thou hast not sown." Yet all these thoughts could not make me sensible to our losses. I even formed agreeable ideas of our going to the hospital. No state appeared to me so poor and miserable, which I should not have thought easy in comparison of the continual domestic persecutions I underwent. My father, who loved me tenderly, and whom I honoured beyond expression, knew nothing of it. God so permitted it, that I should have him also displeased with me for some time : for my mother was continually telling him that I was an ungrateful creature, shewing no regard for them, but all for my husband's family. Appearances were against me ; for I did not go to see them a quarter as often as I should have done. But they knew not the captivity I was in ; and what I was obliged to bear for defending them. These complaints of my mother, and a trivial affair that happened, changed a little my father's fond regard for me ; but it did not hold long. My mother-in-law reproached me, saying, "No afflictions befel them till I came into the house. All misfortunes came along with me." On the other side, my mother wanted me to exclaim against my husband, which I could never submit to.

We continued to meet with loss after loss, the King retrenching a considerable share of our revenues, besides great sums of money lost by our City-house at Paris. I could have no rest or peace in the midst of such great afflictions. I had no mortal either to console me or to advise with. My sister, who had educated me, had departed this life. She died two months before my marriage, and I had no confidence in any other.

I declare, that I find much repugnance in saying so many things of my mother-in-law, and yet more in what I mention of my husband, as I doubt not but my own indiscretion, my caprice, and the occasional sallies of a warm temper, drew many of the crosses upon me. And, although I had what the world calls patience, yet I had neither a relish or love for the cross, and hence I fell into so many faults. Their conduct towards me, which appears so very unreasonable, should not be looked upon with worldly eyes; we should look higher, and then we shall perceive, that it was directed by Providence for my eternal advantage. Indeed, I should have yielded to the repugnance I felt, and been totally silent with regard to their treatment of me, were it not in obedience to you Sir.

I now curled my hair not at all, or very little; very rarely did I look at myself in a glass, that I might not gratify my vanity. I had, for the exercise of reading, books of devotion, such as Thomas a Kempis, on the imitation of Jesus Christ, and the works of St. Francis de Sales. I read these aloud for the improvement of the servants, whilst the maid was combing me, and I suffered myself to be dressed just as she pleased, which freed me from much trouble, and took away the occasions wherein my vanity used to be exercised. The church was the place in which I was most seen, and most tempted with sentiments of vanity. How often have I gone there, not so much to worship God as to be seen! Other women, jealous of me, affirmed that I painted; and told my confessor of it, who chid me for it; but I assured him to the contrary. I often spoke in my own praise, and sought to raise my own esteem by depreciating others: yet these faults gradually decreased; for I was very sorry afterwards for having committed them. I often examined myself very strictly, writing down my faults and slips from week to week, and month to month, to see how much I was improved or reformed. But alas! this



labour, though fatiguing, was but of little service, because I placed most of my trust in my own cares.

My husband's absence was so long, and in the mean time my crosses and vexations at home so great, that I determined to go to him. My mother-in-law strongly opposed it ; but this once, my father interfering, and insisting on it, she let me go. At my arrival, I found he had been dangerously ill. 'Through vexation and disappointment he was very much changed ; for he could not finish his affairs, having no liberty to attend to them, keeping himself concealed at the *Hotel de Longueville*, where Madam de Longueville was extremely kind to me. But as I appeared very much to view, he was in great fear lest I should make him known : in a rage he bade me return home ; but love, and my long absence from him, surmounting every other consideration, he soon relented, and made me stay with him.

He kept me eight days without permitting me to stir out of his chamber ; 'till, fearing the effect of such a close confinement on my constitution, he desired me to go and take a walk in the garden, where I met Madam de Longueville, who testified great joy at seeing me.

I cannot express all the kindness I met with in this house. All the officers here served me with emulation, and applauded me on account of my poor miserable person and exterior deportment : yet I was much on my guard against too great attention thereto. I never entered into discourse with any man when alone. I admitted none into my coach, not even of my relations, unless my husband were in it : neither did I enter into any man's coach. In short, there was not any rule of discretion which I did not duly observe, to avoid giving any suspicion to my husband, or subject of calumny to others. So much precaution had I for a vain point of honour, and so little for the true honour, which is, to please God. Every one studied here how to contribute to divert or oblige me. The appearance of things without,

was too enchanting for me; but it was far otherwise within; chagrin had so much overcome and ruffled my husband, that I had hard things daily to suffer from him. Sometimes he threatened to throw the supper out of the windows: but I said to him, "he would then do me an injury, as I had a keen appetite." I made him laugh, and laughed with him. This appeased him; and the manner in which I spoke, diverted him. Before that, melancholy prevailed over all that I could do, and over the love he had for me. But God both armed me with patience, and gave me grace to return him no disobliging answer; so that the enemy, who attempted to draw me into some offence, was forced to retire in confusion through the signal assistance of that grace.

After this I fell sick. As I would not incommode the *Hotel de Longueville*, I got myself removed to another place, where I was reduced to such extremity, that after having in seven days taken from me forty eight cups of blood, till they could get no more, the doctors gave me over. There was not the least likelihood of my recovery. The priest, who confessed me, being a person of piety and discernment, having been an intimate friend of St. Francis de Sales, appeared well satisfied on my behalf, and said, I should die like a saint. But my sins were too present to my mind, and too painful to my heart, to have such a presumption. At midnight they brought me the holy *viaticum*.\* It was a scene of general distress in the family, and among all that knew me. There was none but myself to whom death was indifferent. I beheld it without fear, and was rendered insensible to its approach. Far otherwise was it with my husband, who was inconsolable, and in an agony of grief, when he saw there was no hope left: yet I miracu-

\* The eucharist, or communion of bread and wine, given to persons in the pangs of death, (in the church of Rome,) to strengthen the soul for its passage to the other world.

lously recovered ; and to me this malady proved of great benefit : for beside teaching me patience under violent pains, it served to illuminate me much in my view of the emptiness of worldly things ; it detached me from self, and gave me new courage to suffer with more resignation than I had hitherto done. The love of God gathered strength in my heart, with a desire to please and be faithful to him. Several other advantages I reaped from it, of which it would be useless to go through the whole detail. I had yet six months to drag along with a slow fever and hepatic flux. It was thought that would have brought me to my end. But thy time, oh my God, was not yet arrived for taking me to thyself. Thy designs over me were widely different from the expectation of those about me ; it being thy determination to make me both the object of thy mercy and the victim of thy justice.

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#### CHAPTER VIII.

*Death of her mother. First a great Lady, afterwards a kinsman of hers, speaks to her of prayer and the presence of God : after which a religious man, from a five years' solitude, is instrumental in making her find God by seeking him within herself, with wonderful effect ; being the beginning of her lasting conversion.*

AFTER languishing a long time I recovered ; about which time my dear mother departed this life, in great tranquility of mind ; having, beside other virtues, been in particular very charitable to the poor. This virtue, so acceptable to God, he was graciously pleased to begin to reward, even in this life, with such a spirit of resignation, that though she was but twenty-four hours sick, she was made perfectly easy about every thing that was near and dear to her in this world. I now applied myself to my duties, never failing to practise that of prayer twice a day. I watched over myself, to sub-

due myself continually. I went to visit the poor in their houses, and assisted them in their maladies; and did (according to my understanding) all the good I knew. Thou, oh my God, increased both my love and my patience, in proportion to my sufferings. I had no regret for the temporal advantages which my mother had procured to my brother above me; yet, at home, they treated me ill about that, as about every thing else. I did not indeed serve thee yet with that fervour which thou wast pleased to give me soon after: for I would have been glad to reconcile thy love with the love of myself and of the world; and I unhappily still found some who loved me, and whom I could not forbear wishing to please; not that I loved them, but for the love I bore to myself.

A Lady, who was an exile, came to my father's house. He offered her an apartment in it, which she accepted, and staid there a long time. She was one of great piety and inwardness. She had a singular kindness for me, because she saw that I had a desire to love God, and that I employed myself in the exterior works of charity. She remarked that I had the virtues of an active and bustling life; but that it was not in the simplicity of prayer she was in. She sometimes dropped a word to me on that subject; but as my time was not yet come, I did not understand her. She served me more by her example than her words. I observed on her countenance something which marked a great enjoyment of the presence of God. This, I tried by the exertion of study and reflection to gain to myself; but with much trouble to little purpose. I wanted to have by my own efforts, what I could not acquire but in ceasing from all efforts.

My father's nephew, of whom I have made mention before, was returned from Cochinchina, to carry over some priests from Europe. I was exceedingly glad to see him, well remembering what good his first passing by had done me. The Lady above mentioned, was no less glad than my-

self ; and they conversed together in a spiritual language. The virtues of this amiable relation charmed me ; I admired his continual prayer, without being able to comprehend it. I endeavoured to meditate and think on God without intermission, to utter prayers and ejaculations, but could not acquire by all my toil, what God at length gave me himself, and which is experienced only in simplicity. My cousin did all he could to attach me more strongly to God. He conceived a vast affection for me. The purity he observed in me from the corruption of the age, the abhorrence of sin at a time of life when others are beginning to relish the pleasures of it, (for I was not yet eighteen years old) gave him a tenderness for me. I complained to him of my faults ingenuously : for I had been sufficiently illuminated in regard to them ; but, as the difficulty of entirely reforming myself, much abated my courage, he cheered and exhorted me to support myself, and to persevere in my good endeavours for it.

I believe his prayers were more effectual than his words ; for no sooner was he gone out of my father's house, than thou, oh my divine Love ! manifested thy signal regard to me. The desire I had to please thee, the tears I shed, the manifold pains I underwent, the labours I sustained, and the little fruit I reaped from them, moved thee with compassion. Thou gave me in a moment, by thy grace, what I could not procure for myself by all my efforts. Such was the condition of my soul, when by a goodness so much the greater, as I had rendered myself the more unworthy of it, thou sent the favourable breath of thy divine operative power to make me steer with full sails over the sea of afflictions.

I had often spoke to my confessor about the great anxiety it gave me to find I could not meditate, in order to pray, nor imagine to myself any thing profitable to the purpose. Subjects of prayer which were too extensive, to me were useless.

Such as were short and pithy suited me better; but my confessor, I found did not comprehend the matter, or understand my meaning.

At length God permitted a religious person, very devout, of the order of St. Francis,\* to pass by my father's habitation. He had designed going another way, that was shorter and more commodious; but a secret power made him change his design. He saw at first that there was something for him to do, and thought that God had called him for the conversion of a man of some distinction in that country; but his labours there proved fruitless. It was the conquest of my soul which was designed. As soon as he arrived in our neighbourhood, he came to see my father, who was very glad of his coming. At this time I was confined by the birth of my second son; my father was sick and like to die. For some time they prudently concealed it from me, till some person more indiscreet told me of it. I instantly arose, weak as I was, and went to see him at the hazard of my life; and a dangerous illness it cost me. My father was recovered, but not entirely; yet enough to give me new marks of his affection. I told him of the strong desire I had to love God, and my great sorrow for not being able to do it fully. My father, as he had a great fondness for me, thought he could not give me a more solid indication thereof, than in procuring me an acquaintance with this worthy man. He told me what he knew of him, and urged me to go and see him.

I made at first a difficulty of doing it, being intent on observing the rules of the strictest prudence. However, my father's repeated instances had with me the place of a positive

\* St. Francis of Assise, in Italy, first a merchant, became afterward a patriarch and founder of the order which bears his name, viz. the Order of Franciscan Friars, founded in 1206, approved by Pope Innocent III. in 1223. It has since branched into several others, as Minims, Recolets, Capuchins, &c. The founder died in 1226, aged 46.

command. I thought I could not do amiss, in a thing which I only did in obedience to him. I therefore took a kinswoman along with me and went. At first he seemed a little confused; for he was reserved towards women. Being newly come out of a five years' solitude, he was surprized that I was the first to address him. He spoke not a word for some time. I knew not what to attribute his silence to. I did not hesitate to speak to him, and tell him in a few words my difficulties about prayer. He presently replied, "It is, madam, because you seek without, what you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will find him."

Having said these words, he left me. They were to me like the stroke of a dart, which pierced my heart asunder. I felt at this instant deeply wounded with the love of God; a wound, so delightful, that I desired it never might be healed. These words brought into my heart what I had been seeking so many years; or rather they made me discover what was there, and which I did not enjoy for want of knowing it. Oh my Lord! thou wast in my heart, and demanded only the turning of my mind inward, to make me feel thy presence. Oh infinite Goodness! Thou wast so near, and I ran hither and thither seeking thee, and yet found thee not. My life was a burden to me, and my happiness was within myself. I was poor in the midst of riches, and ready to perish with hunger, near a table plentifully spread, and a continual feast. Oh Beauty, ancient and new! why have I known thee so late! Alas, I sought thee where thou wast not, and did not seek thee where thou wast. It was for want of understanding these words of thy gospel, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: for behold the kingdom of God is within you." This I now experienced, since thou became my King, and my heart thy kingdom, where thou reigned as sovereign, and did all thy will.

I told this good man, "that I did not know what he had done to me, that my heart was quite changed, that God was there; for from that moment he had given me an experience of his presence in my soul; not by thought, or any application of mind, but as a thing really possessed after the sweetest manner." I experienced those words in the Canticles: "Thy name is as precious ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee." For I felt in my soul an unction, which, as a salutary perfume, healed in a moment all my wounds. I slept not all that night, because thy love, oh my God! flowed in me like delicious oil; and burned as a fire which was going to destroy all that was left of *self* in an instant. I was all on a sudden so altered that I was hardly to be known either by myself or others. I found no more those troublesome faults, or that reluctance to duty. They all disappeared, as being consumed, like chaff in a great fire.

I now became desirous that the instrument hereof might become my director, preferable to any other. This good father, however, could not readily resolve to charge himself with my conduct, though he saw so surprising a change effected by the hand of God. Several reasons induced him to excuse himself; first my person, then my youth, for I was only nineteen years of age; and lastly a promise he had made to God, from a distrust of himself, never to take upon himself the direction of any of our sex, unless God, by some particular providence, should charge him therewith. Upon my earnest and repeated request to him to become my director, he said he would pray to God thereupon, and bade me do so too. As he was at prayer, it was said to him, "Fear not that charge; she is my spouse." This, when I heard it, affected me greatly. "What, (said I to myself) a frightful monster of iniquity, who have done so much to offend my God, in abusing his favours, and requiting them



with ingratitude; and now thus to be declared his spouse!" After this he consented to my request.

Nothing was more easy to me now than to practise prayer. Hours passed away like moments, while I could hardly do any thing else but pray. The fervency of my love allowed me no intermission. It was a prayer of rejoicing and of possession; wherein the taste of God was so great, so pure, unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the powers of the soul into a profound recollection, without act or discourse. For I had now no sight but of Jesus Christ alone. All else was excluded, in order to love with the greater extent, without any selfish motives or reasons for loving.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *Remarks on spiritual ecstasies, raptures and visions.*

SUCH was the prayer that was given me at once, which is far above ecstasies, transports, and visions. All these gifts are more subject to the illusion or transformation of the adversary.

It is of such that St. Paul speaks; when he says, That *Satan transforms himself into an angel of light*, which is generally the case with such as are fond of visions, and lay a stress on them; because they are apt to convey a vanity to the soul, or at least to hinder it from humbly attending on God alone.

Ecstasies arise from a sensible relish, and may be termed a spiritual sensuality, wherein the soul letting itself go too far, by reason of the sweetness it finds in them, falls imperceptibly into a state of decay. The crafty enemy presents such kinds of interior elevations and raptures, for baits to betray the soul; to render it sensual, to fill it with vanity and self-love, to fix its esteem and attention on the gifts of

God, and to hinder it from following Jesus Christ in the way of renunciation, and of death to all things but him only.

But the immediate word of God never deceives. It is incapable of any error. It is Jesus Christ himself, the word which is never one moment mute or unfruitful; it never ceases in the centre of the soul, when disposed for the hearing of it. It is efficacious in that soul in which it is received, and in communicating itself through that to other souls, to make them fruitful to eternal life; Christ himself becoming the life of such souls.

Far different from a false assurance or frivolous dependence on a deceitful revelation of things to come, is *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, mentioned by St. Paul. It is manifested to the soul when the eternal word is communicated to it. It makes us *new creatures, created anew in Him*. This revelation is always true, and what the adversary of man cannot counterfeit. From hence proceeds the only safe ecstasy or transport, which is operated only by naked faith, and by dying, even to the gifts of God, how sublime and excellent soever they may appear; because as long as the soul continues resting in them, it does not fully renounce itself, and so never passing into God, loses the real enjoyment of the Giver, which is indeed an inestimable loss.

Lest I should let my mind go after these gifts, and steal myself from thy love, oh my God, thou wast pleased to fix me in a continual adherence to thyself alone. Souls thus directed, go the shortest way. They are to expect great sufferings, especially if they are mighty in faith, in mortification, and deadness to all but God alone. A pure and disinterested love, an intenseness of mind for the advancement of thy interest, and of nothing else, these were the dispositions thou then implanted in me, and even a fervent desire of suffering for thee. The cross which I had hitherto borne only with resignation was now become my delight, and the special object of my rejoicing.

## CHAPTER X.

*The account of her conversion and its effects continued. Remarks on the union of the soul with God.*

I WROTE an account of my wonderful change in point of happiness to that good father who had been made the instrument of it. It filled him both with joy and astonishment. Oh my God, what penances did the love of sufferings cause me to undergo! I practised all the austerities I could imagine; but they were all too weak to satisfy the desire I had for suffering. Though my body was very delicate, the instruments of penance tore it without giving me pain enough, as I thought,\* I dressed grievous sores and wounds, and gave remedies to the sick. At my first engaging in this employ, my very heart would rise within me; and it was with the greatest difficulty I was able to bear it. But as soon as my aversion ceased, and my heart could as well bear the most grievous as the most agreeable things, this engagement was removed from me, to make way for others: for I did nothing of myself, but left myself to be wholly governed by my sovereign in all things.

When that good father asked me how I loved God, I answered, "Far more than the most passionate lover his beloved; and that even this comparison was improper, since the love of the creatures never can attain to this, either in strength or in depth." This love of God occupied my heart so constantly and so strongly, that I could think of nothing else, as indeed I judged nothing else worthy of my thoughts.

\* M. Guion here enters into a detail of the voluntary austerities which she inflicted on her body, which show the strength of her zeal, according to the light in which she then saw things, both for the punishment of sins committed in that body, and to prepare it for all manner of hardships and sufferings she might meet with, in confessing Christ before men, from whom cruel persecution was to be expected; as the kingdom of Satan was so extensively prevalent.

The good father above mentioned, was an excellent preacher. He was desired to preach in the parish to which I belonged, called Magdalen's. When I came, I was so strongly absorbed in God, that I could neither open my eyes, nor hear any thing that he said. I found that thy word, oh my God, made its own impression on my heart, and there had its effect, without the mediation of words, or any attention to them. And I have found it so ever since, though after a different manner; according to the different degrees and conditions I have passed through. So deeply was I settled in the inward spirit of prayer, that I could scarce any more pronounce the vocal prayers.

This immersion in God absorbed all things. I could not see the saints, or even the blessed virgin, out of God; but I beheld them all in him. And though I tenderly loved certain saints, as \*St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Teresa, with all those who were spiritual, yet I could not form to myself images of them, nor invoke any of them out of God.

A few weeks after I had received that interior wound of the heart, which had begun my change, the feast of Notre Dame (or the blessed virgin,) was held in the convent in which was that good father, my director. I went in the morning to obtain the indulgences; and was much surprised when I came there and saw that I could not attempt it, though I stayed above five hours in the church. I was penetrated with so lively a feeling of pure love, that I could not resolve to abridge by indulgences the pains due to my sins. I cried, "oh my Lord, I am willing to suffer for thee. I find no other pleasure but in suffering for thee. Indulgences may be good for those who know not the value of sufferings, who choose not that thy divine justice should be satisfied; who, having mercenary souls, are not

\* The three first mentioned Saints are scriptural. An account of the fourth will be given in the appendix.

so much afraid of displeasing thee, as of the pains which are annexed to sin." Yet fearing I might be mistaken, and commit a fault in not getting the indulgences, for I had never heard of any one being in such a way before, I returned again to try to get them, but in vain; so not knowing what to do, I resigned myself herein to our Lord; and, when returned home, wrote to that good father an account of my disposition and sentiments, in such a manner, that, preaching that day, he made what I had written a part of his sermon, therein reciting it verbatim as I had written it.

— I now quitted all companies, bade farewell for ever to plays and diversions, dancing, unprofitable walks, and parties of pleasure. For two years I had left off the curling of my hair, and yet I looked very well, and it was what my husband approved. My only pleasure now was to steal some moments of the day to be alone with thee; oh thou, who art my only love! All other pleasure was a pain to me. I lost not thy presence, which was given me by a continual infusion; not as I had imagined, by the effort of the head, or force of thought, in meditating on God, but in the bottom of the will, where I tasted with unutterable sweetness the enjoyment of the beloved object, yet not, (as I came to do afterwards,) by an essential union, but by a real union in the will, which brought me to discern, in a happy experience that the soul was created to enjoy its God.

This union is the most perfect of all those which are operated in the powers of the soul.\* Its effect is much greater; for though the unions of the other powers enlighten the mind and absorb the memory; yet, if they are not accompanied with that of the will, they are of little use, as they produce only transient effects. The union of the will subjects the soul to God, conforms it to all his mind, causes

\* The three powers of the soul which she here mentions, seem to be, 1st. The imagination. 2d. The understanding. 3d. The will, including the affections and passions.

self-will gradually to die, and lastly drawing with it the other powers, by means of the charity with which it is filled, it causes them gradually to be reunited in the centre, and to become lost therein, as to their own nature and operations.

This loss may be called the *annihilation of the powers*, as they are hereby annihilated, in regard to us, though in themselves they still subsist. It is in proportion as charity fills and inflames, that it becomes so strong, as by degrees to surmount all the activity of the will of man, in order to subject it to that of God, in such manner, that when the soul is docile, to leave itself to be purified, and emptied of all that which it has of its own, opposite to the will of God, it finds itself by little and little detached from every motion of its own, and placed in a holy indifference for willing; wishing nothing but what God does and wills. This never can be attained by the activity of our will, even though it were employed in continual devotions; because these, though very virtuous, are so far selfish actions, and cause the will still to subsist. But when the will of the creature thoroughly submits to that of the Creator, leaving itself to be totally destroyed by the operation of charity, this consummates it in that of God, purifying it, before it acts, from all restriction, resemblance and selfishness.

The case is the same with the other two powers, whereinto, by means of charity, the two other theological virtues are introduced. Faith so strongly seizes on the understanding, as to make it decline all reasonings, all particular brightnesses and illustrations, were they ever so sublime; which sufficiently demonstrates how far visions, revelations, ecstasies &c. differ from this, and hinder the soul from being lost in God; though by them it appears lost in him for some short seasons; but it is not a true loss; since the soul which is entirely lost in God finds itself again no more.

Faith then makes the soul lose every distinct light; in order to place it in its own pure light.

As we see that the sun with his general light entirely covers or drowns all the little or distinct lights of the stars, which (in its absence) glow and are brightly discernible; yet do not give us a light whereby we may see things, as they are, in their proper forms and colours: so visions and ecstasies may be discernible by reason of their little extent, (being narrow and selfish) but do not fix us in the truth; they are very liable to make us mistake by their uncertain glimmering. It is the same case with all the inward openings which are not from true faith. This faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which, as it arises, undeceives the soul from the misconceptions occasioned by the others, and darkening all the self-pleasing lights, puts it in the pure and sacred light of truth; this is that alone which is safe and sure. This is that *true light which* so justly and excellently *enlighteneth every man coming into the world* of the new life in God. This light gave my heart to see its minutest faults, that nothing but pure love might be in the centre of the soul, according to the words of St. John, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God; for God is love."

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## CHAPTER XI.

*Remarks on Self-denial. The love of God takes a powerful hold on her heart. Observations on Divine Justice.*

My senses (as I have described) were continually mortified, and under perpetual restraint. For it should be well noted, that to conquer them totally, it is necessary to deny them the smallest relaxation, until the victory is completed. We see those who content themselves in practising great outward austerities, and yet by indulging their senses in

what is called innocent and necessary, they remain for ever unsubdued; so that austerities, however severe, will not conquer the senses. To destroy their power, the most effectual means is, in general, to deny them firmly what will please, to give them every thing that disgusts; and to persevere in this, until they are reduced to be without appetite or repugnance. But if we attempt, during the warfare, to grant them any relaxation, we act like those, who, under pretext of strengthening a man who was condemned to be starved to death, should give him from time to time a little nourishment, which indeed would prolong his torments, and postpone his death.

It is just the same with the death of the senses, the powers, the understanding, and self-will; for if we do not eradicate every remains of self subsisting in these, we support them in a dying life to the end. This state and its termination, are clearly set forth by St. Paul. He speaks of *bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus*: but lest we should rest here, he fully distinguishes this from the state of *being dead and having our life hid with Christ in God*.—It is only by a total death to self we can be lost in God.

He who is thus dead, has no farther need of mortification; for the very end of mortification is accomplished in him, and all is become new. It is an unhappy error in those good souls, who have arrived at a conquest of the bodily senses, through this unremitted and continual mortification, that they should still continue attached to the exercise of it; they should rather drop their attention thereto, and remain in indifference; accepting with equality, the good as the bad, the sweet as the bitter, and bend their whole attention, to a labour of greater importance; namely, the mortification of the *mind* and *self-will*, beginning by dropping all the activity of self, which can never be done without the most profound prayer; no more than the death



of the senses can be perfected, without profound recollection joined to mortification ; and indeed, recollection is the chief means, whereby we attain to the conquest of the senses, as it detaches, and separates us from them, and sweetly saps the very cause from whence they derive their influence over us.

The more thou didst augment my love, and my patience, O my Lord, the less respite had I from the most oppressive crosses : but love rendered them easy to bear. O ye poor souls, who exhaust yourselves with needless vexation, if you would but seek God in your hearts, there would be a speedy period to all your troubles ; for the increase of crosses would proportionably increase your delight.

Love, at the beginning, athirst for mortification, impelled me to seek and invent various kinds ; and it is surprising, that as soon as the bitterness of any mode of mortification was exhausted, another kind was pointed out to me, and I was inwardly led to pursue it. Divine Love so enlightened my heart, and so scrutinized into its secret springs, that the smallest defects became exposed. If I was about to speak, something wrong was instantly seen therein, and I was compelled to silence : if I kept silence, faults herein were presently discovered,—in every action there seemed to be something defective, in my mortifications, my penances, my alms-givings, my retirement, I was faulty. When I walked, I observed there was something wrong ; if I spoke any way in my own favour, I saw pride.—If I said within myself, alas, I will speak no more, here was *self*. If I was cheerful and open, I was condemned ;—this pure love found always matter for reproof in me, and was jealous that nothing should escape unnoticed. It was not that I was particularly attentive over myself, for it was even with constraint I could look at all at myself ; as my attention towards God, by an attachment of my will to his, was without intermission, I waited continually upon him, and he watched inces-

santly over me, and guided me by his providence. I knew not how to communicate what I felt to any one. I was so lost to myself that I could scarcely go about self-examination; when I attempted it, all ideas of myself immediately disappeared, and I found myself occupied with my ONE OBJECT, without distinction of ideas: I was absorbed in peace inexpressible; I saw by the eye of faith that it was God that thus wholly possessed me; but I did not reason at all about it.

It must not however, be supposed that Divine Love suffered my faults to go unpunished. O my God! with what rigour dost thou punish the most faithful, the most loving and beloved of thy children. I mean not externally, for this would be inadequate to the smallest fault, in a soul that God is about to purify radically; and the punishments it can inflict on itself, are rather gratifications and refreshments than otherwise. Indeed, the manner in which he corrects his chosen, must be felt, or it is impossible to conceive how dreadful it is; and in my attempt to explain it, I shall be unintelligible, except to experienced souls. It is an internal burning, a secret fire, sent from God to purge away the fault, giving extreme pain, until this purification is effected. It is like a dislocated joint, which is in incessant torment, until the bone is replaced. This pain is so severe, that the soul would do any thing to satisfy God for the fault, and would rather be torn in pieces than endure the torment. Sometimes she flies to others, and opens her state, that she may find consolation, but thereby she frustrates God's designs towards her. It is of the utmost consequence to know what use to make of this distress, as the whole of one's spiritual advancement depends thereon. We should at these seasons of internal anguish, obscurity, and mourning, co-operate with God, and endure this consuming torture in its utmost extent (whilst it continues) without attempting to lessen or increase it; but bear it pas-

sively, nor seek to satisfy God by any thing we can do of ourselves. To continue passive at such a time, is extremely difficult, and requires great firmness and courage: I knew some, who being defective herein, never advanced farther in the spiritual process, because they grew impatient under the pain, and quickly sought some means of consolation. But my Lord taught me to seek no redress, until he had, as it were, fully avenged himself. Oh how lovely, how rigidly just and pitiless, yet how sweet are his dealings with his children! I have endured this torment, not only many hours, but days, in proportion to the nature of my fault; a hasty word, an unguarded look, was punished with severity; and I saw clearly, that had I attempted to put my own hand to the work, under pretence of supporting the ark, I should have been punished like *Uzza*. Indeed, it was inexpressibly difficult, to lie passive under these crucifying operations of the Divine Spirit.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Unreasonable and outrageous behaviour of her waiting-maid and of her husband. She becomes acquainted with the Prioress of the Benedictines. Persecutions occasioned by her confessor.*

THE treatment of my husband and mother-in-law, however rigorous and insulting, I now bore in silence, which was not difficult for me; because the greatness of my interior occupation, and what passed within, rendered me insensible to all the rest; yet there were times when I was left to myself; and then I could not refrain from tears, when they fell violently on me. I did the lowest offices for them, to humble myself; preventing such as had been used to do them; yet all this did not win their favour. When they were in a rage, though I could not find that I had given them any occasion for it, yet I did not fail to

beg their pardon, and even from the girl I have spoken of. I had a good deal of pain to surmount myself, as to the last; because she became the more insolent for it; reproaching me with things which ought to have made her blush, and to have covered her with shame. As she saw that I contradicted and resisted her no more in any thing, she proceeded to treat me still worse: and when I asked her pardon, for the very offences which she had given me, she triumphed, saying, "I knew very well I was in the right." Her arrogance rose to that height, that I would not have treated the meanest servant, or vassal, as she treated me.

One day, as she was dressing me, she pulled me very roughly, and spoke to me very insolently. I said to her, "It is not on my own account that I am willing to answer you, for what you do to me gives me no pain, but lest you should set thus before persons to whom it would give offence: moreover, as I am your mistress, God is certainly offended therewith." She left me that moment, and ran like a mad woman to meet my husband, telling him, "she would stay no longer, I treated her so ill, and that I hated her for the care she took of him in his indispositions, wanting her not to do any service for him." As my husband was very hasty, he took fire at these words. I finished the dressing of myself alone, since she had left me, and durst not call another girl; for she would not suffer another girl to come near me. All on a sudden, I saw my husband coming like a lion. Whatever fury he had at any time before against me, was not equal to this. He vented his rage against me, by the most abusive language; he did not strike me, but in his rage threw his crutch at me, which fell very near, without touching me. The girl in the mean time came in. At the sight of her, his rage redoubled. I kept near to God during the whole time, in profound silence, as a victim disposed to suffer whatever he would permit. My husband at length ordered me to beg her pardon, which I readily did, and thereby

appeared him. I went presently into my closet, where I no sooner was, than my divine Director impelled me to go out and make this girl a present, to recompence her for the cross which she had caused me, which I did. She was a little astonished, but her heart was too hard to be gained.

I often acted thus, for she frequently gave me such opportunities. She had a singular dexterity in attending the sick, for this reason, (as my husband was very seldom in health,) he had a very great regard for her, and would suffer none but her to touch him. Moreover, she was so artful, that before him she affected an extraordinary respect for me: but when he was not present, if I said a word to her, though with the greatest mildness, if she heard him coming, she cried out with all her might, that she was unhappy; and acted the distressed in such a manner, that, without informing himself of the truth, he was irritated against me, as was my mother-in-law too.

The violence I did to my proud and hasty nature was so great, that I could hold out no longer. I was quite spent with it. It seemed sometimes as if I was inwardly rent, and I have often fallen sick with the struggle. She did not forbear exclaiming against me, even before persons of distinction, who came to see me. If I was silent, she took offence at that yet more, and said, "I despised her." She cried me down, and made complaints of me to every body; but all this redounded to my honour and her own disgrace: my reputation was so well established, on account of my exterior modesty, my devotion, and the great acts of charity which I did, that nothing could shake it.

Sometimes she ran out into the very street, crying out against me. One time she exclaimed, "Am not I very unhappy to have such a mistress?" People gathered about her to know what I had done to her; and not knowing what to say, she answered, "I had not spoken to her all the

day." They returned, laughing, and said, "She has done you no great harm then."

I am surprised at the blindness of confessors, and at their permitting their penitents to conceal so much of the truth from them—for the confessor of this girl made her pass for a saint. This he said in my hearing. I answered nothing; for Love would not admit me speaking of my troubles; but that I should consecrate them all to him by a profound silence.

My husband was out of humour with my devotion, it became insupportable to him, "What says he, you love God so much, that you love me no longer;" so little did he comprehend that the true conjugal love is that which God himself forms in the heart that loves him. Oh, thou who art pure and holy, thou imprinted in me from the first, such a love of chastity, that there was nothing in the world which I would not have undergone to possess and preserve it. I endeavoured not to be disagreeable to my husband in any thing, and to please him in every thing he could require of me. God gave me such a purity of soul at that time, that I had not so much as a bad thought. Sometimes my husband said to me, "One sees plainly that you never lose the presence of God."

The world, seeing I quitted it, persecuted and turned me into ridicule. I was its entertainment, and the subject of its fables. It could not bear that a woman, who was scarce twenty years of age, should thus make war against it, and overcome. My mother-in-law took part with the world, and blamed me for not doing many things, that in her heart she would have been highly offended with, had I done them. I was as one lost, and all alone: so little commerce had I with the world, farther than necessity required. I seemed to experience literally those words of St. Paul, "I live; yet no more I, but Christ liveth in me;" for he was become the soul of my soul, and the life of my life. His op-

erations were so powerful, so sweet, and so secret, all together, that I could not express them.

About this time we went into the country on some business. I sought for solitude in a dry place, along the river, where the communications of divine love were unutterably sweet in retirement.

I was insatiable for prayer, I arose at four o'clock in the morning to pray. I went very far to the church, which was so situated that the coach could not come to it. There was a steep hill to go down and another to ascend. All that cost me nothing: I had such a longing desire to meet with God, as my only good, who on his part was graciously forward to give himself to his poor creature, and for it to do even visible miracles. Such as saw me lead a life so very different from the women of the world, said I was a fool. They attributed it to stupidity. Sometimes they said, "What can all this mean? Some people think this lady has parts, but nothing of them appears." For if I went into company, often I could not speak; so much was I engaged within, so inward with the Lord, as not to attend to any thing else: if any near me spoke, I heard nothing of what they said. I generally took one with me, that this might not appear. I took some work, to hide under that appearance; the real employ of my heart. When I was alone, the work dropped out of my hands: and I could do nothing else but resign myself to be wholly taken up with love. I wanted to persuade a relation of my husband's to practise prayer. She thought me a fool, for depriving myself of all the amusements of the age: but the Lord has since opened her eyes, to make her despise them. I could have wished to teach all the world to love God; and thought it depended only on them to feel what I felt. God made use of my thinking thus, to gain many souls to himself.

The good father I have spoken of, who was the instru-

ment of my conversion, brought me acquainted with Genevieve Granger, prioress of the Benedictines, one of the greatest servants of God in her time. She proved of very great service to me, as in the sequel will appear. My confessor, who had told every one that I was a saint before, when so full of miseries, and so far from the condition to which God in his mercy had now brought me, seeing I placed a confidence in the Father of whom I have spoken, and that I steered in a road that was unknown to him, declared openly against me: and the monks of his order persecuted me much. They even preached publickly against me, as a person under a delusion.

My husband and mother-in-law, who till now had been indifferent about this confessor, now joined him, and ordered me to leave off prayer, and the exercise of piety; but that I could not do. Even when I was in company, God seized my heart more powerfully. There was carried on a conversation within me, very different from that which passed without. I did what I could to hinder it from appearing, but could not. The presence of so great a Master manifested itself, even on my countenance: and that pained my husband, as he sometimes told me. I did what I could to hinder it from being noticed, but was not able completely to hide it. I was so much inwardly occupied that I knew not what I eat. I made as if I eat some kinds of meat, though I did not take any, and acted so dexterously that they did not perceive it. This deep inward attention suffered me scarcely to see or hear any thing.—I still continued to use many severe mortifications and austerities—Yet they did not in the least diminish the freshness of my countenance.

I had often grievous fits of sickness and no consolation in life, but in the practice of prayer, and in seeing mother Granger. How dear did these cost me, especially the former! but what do I say: Oh my Lord,—Is this esteeming



the cross as I ought, should I not rather say that prayer to me was recompensed *with the cross*, and the cross *with prayer*. Oh ye inseparable gifts, united in my heart and life! When your eternal light arose in my soul, how perfectly it reconciled me, and made you the object of my love! from the moment I received thee, I have never been free from the cross, nor it seems without prayer—though for a long time I thought myself deprived thereof, which exceedingly augmented my afflictions.

My confessor at first exerted his efforts to hinder me from practising prayer, and from seeing mother Granger. And, he violently stirred up my husband and mother-in-law to hinder me from praying: The method they took to effect it, was, to watch me from morning to night. I durst not go out from my mother-in-law's chamber, or from my husband's bed-side. Sometimes I carried my work to the window, under a pretence of seeing better, in order to relieve myself with some moments repose; but they came to watch me very closely, to see if I did not pray instead of working. When my husband and mother-in-law played at cards, if I did but turn towards the fire, they watched to see if I continued my work or shut my eyes; if they observed that I closed them, they would be in a fury against me for several hours: but what is most strange, when my husband went abroad, having some days of health, he would not allow me to pray in his absence. He marked my work, and sometimes, after he had just gone out, returning immediately, if he found me in my closet, he would be in a rage. In vain I said to him, "Surely, Sir, what matters it what I do when you are absent, if I be assiduous in attending you when you are present?" That would not satisfy him; he insisted upon it that I should no more pray in his absence than his presence.

I believe there is hardly a torment equal to that of being ardently drawn to retirement, and not having it in our

power to be retired. But, oh my God, the war they raised, to hinder me from loving thee, did but augment my love; and while they were striving to prevent my addresses to thee, thou drewest me into an inexpressible silence; and the more they laboured to separate me from thee, the more closely didst thou unite me to thyself: the flame of thy love was kindled, and increased, by every thing that was done to extinguish it.

Often through compliance I played at piquet with my husband, and at such times was even more interiorly attracted than if I had been at church. I was scarce able to contain the fire which burned in my soul, which had all the fervour of what men call love, but nothing of its impetuosity; for the more ardent, the more peaceable it was. This fire gained strength from every thing that was done to suppress it: and the spirit of prayer was nourished and increased from their contrivances and endeavours to disallow me any time for practising it. I loved, without considering of a motive or reason for loving; for nothing passed in my head, but much in the innermost of my soul. I thought not about any recompense, gift, or favour, which he could bestow, or I receive. He himself was the only object which attracted my heart. I could not contemplate his attributes. I knew nothing else, but to *love* and to *suffer*. Oh, ignorance, more truly learned than any science of the Doctors, since it taught me so well Jesus Christ crucified, and brought me to be in love with his holy cross. I could then have wished to die, in order to be inseparably united to him who so powerfully attracted my heart. As all this passed in the will, the imagination and the understanding being absorbed in it, in an union of enjoyment, I knew not what to say, having never read or heard of such a state as I experienced; I dreaded delusion and feared all was not right, for before this I had known nothing of the operations of God in souls. I had only read St. Francis

de Sales, Thomas a Kempis, the Spiritual Combat, and the Holy Scriptures ; I was quite a stranger to those interior and spiritual books wherein such states are described.

Then all those amusements and pleasures that are so prized and esteemed, appeared to me dull and insipid, so that I wondered how it could be that I had ever enjoyed them. And indeed, since that time, I could never find any satisfaction or enjoyment out of God, although I have sometimes been unfaithful enough to endeavour to.—I was not astonished that martyrs gave their lives for Jesus Christ. I thought them happy, and sighed after their privilege of suffering for him—for I so esteemed the cross, that my greatest trouble was, the want of suffering as much as my heart thirsted for.

This respect and esteem for the cross continually increased ; and although afterwards, I lost the sensible relish and enjoyment thereof, yet the love and esteem has never quitted me no more than the cross itself.—Indeed, it has ever been my faithful companion, changing and augmenting, in proportion to the changes and dispositions of my inward state. Oh blessed cross, thou hast never quitted me, since I surrendered myself to my divine crucified Master, and I still hope that thou wilt never abandon me.—So eager was I for the cross, that I endeavoured to make myself feel the utmost rigour of every mortification—and felt them to the quick : yet this only served to awaken my desire of suffering, and to shew me that it is God alone, that can prepare and send crosses suitable to a soul that thirsts for a *following of his sufferings, and a conformity to his death.* The more my state of prayer augmented, my desire of suffering grew stronger, and the full weight of heavy crosses from every side came thundering upon me.

The peculiar property of this prayer of the heart is to give a strong faith. Mine was without limits, as was also my resignation to God, and my confidence in him, my love

of his will, and of the orders of his providence over me. I was very timorous before, but now feared nothing. It is in such a case that one feels the efficacy of these words of the gospel, *My yoke is easy, and my burden light.*

### CHAPTER XIII.

*She becomes unable to say her customary vocal prayers. A journey to Paris. Her regale at St. Cloud, ends in remorse. Singular discourse with one who had been a beggar.*

I HAD a secret desire given me, from that time to be wholly devoted to the disposal of my God, let that be what it would. I said, "What couldst thou demand of me, that I would not willingly sacrifice or offer thee? Oh, spare me not." I could scarcely hear God or our Lord Jesus Christ spoken of, without being almost transported out of myself. What surprised me the most, was, the great difficulty I had to say the vocal prayers I had been used to repeat. As soon as I opened my lips to pronounce them, the love of God seized me so strongly, that I was swallowed up in a profound silence, and an inexpressible peace. I made fresh attempts, but still in vain. I began again and again, but could not go on. And as I had never heard of such a state, I knew not what to do. My inability still increased, because my love to God was still growing more strong, more violent and more overpowering. There was made in me, without the sound of words, a continual prayer, which seemed to me to be the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ himself; a prayer of the Word, which is made by the Spirit, that according to St. Paul, "asketh for us that which is good, perfect, and conformable to the will of God."

My domestic crosses continued. I was deprived of seeing or even writing to Mrs. Granger, my very going to divine service, or the sacrament, were sources of woful of-

fences, and the only amusement I had left me, was the visiting and attending the poor sick and sore, and performing the lowest offices for them.

But now my prayer-time began to be exceedingly distressful, I compelled myself to continue at it, although deprived of all comfort and consolation, and yet when I was not employed therein, I felt an ardent desire and longing for it. I suffered inexpressible anguish in my mind, and endeavoured with the severest inflictions of corporeal austerities to mitigate and divert it, but in vain; the dryness and barrenness still increased, I found no more that enlivening vigour, which had hitherto carried me on in the paths of virtue with great swiftness. My passions (which were not yet thoroughly mortified) revived, and caused me new conflicts. I seemed to myself, to be like these young brides, who find a great deal of difficulty to lay aside their self-love, and follow their husbands to the war. I relapsed into a vain complacency and fondness for myself. My propensity to pride and vanity, which seemed quite dead, while I was so filled with the love of God, now shewed itself again, and gave me severe exercise; which made me lament the exterior beauty of my person, and pray to God incessantly, that he would remove from me that obstacle, and make me ugly. I could even have wished to be deaf, blind and dumb, that nothing might divert me from the love of God.

I set out on a journey, which we had then to make, and here I appeared more than ever like those lamps, which emit a new glimmering flash, when they are just on the point of expiring. Alas! how many snares were laid in my way! I met them at every step. I even committed infidelities through unwatchfulness. But, oh my God, with what rigour didst thou punish them! How many tears did those inadvertent faults, which I fell into through a weak compliance, cost me! Thou knowest, oh my Lord, that

it was not that I wished to avoid the punishment of my misdoings, that I shed those tears. With what pleasure would I have suffered the most rigorous severity, to have been cured of my infidelity; and to what severe chastisement did I not condemn myself! Sometimes thou treated me like a father who pities the child, and caresses it after its involuntary faults. How often didst thou make me sensible of thy love towards me, notwithstanding my blemishes. It was the sweetness of this love after my falls, which caused my greatest pain; for the more the amiableness of thy love was extended to me, the more inconsolable I was for having departed ever so little from thee. For when I had inadvertently neglected any thing, I found thee ready to receive me; and I have often cried out, "Oh my God! is it possible thou canst be so gracious to such an offender, and so indulgent to my faults; so propitious to one who has wandered astray from thee, by vain compliances, and an unworthy fondness for frivolous objects? And yet no sooner do I return, than I find thee waiting with open arms to receive me."

O sinner, sinner! hast thou any reason to complain of God? Ah, if there yet remains any justice in thee, confess the truth, and own that it is owing to thyself if thou goest wrong; that in departing from him, thou disobeyest his call; and that, after all this, when thou returnest, he is ready to receive thee; and if thou returnest not, he makes use of the most engaging motives to win thee thereto; yet thou turnest a deaf ear to his voice; thou wilt not hear him. Thou sayest he speaks not to thee, though he calls loudly. It is therefore only because thou daily rebellest, and art growing daily more and more deaf to "the voice of the charmer." Oh my Lord, I am sure thou didst never cease to speak to my heart, and wast always ready to succour me in the time of my necessity.

When I was at Paris, and the Clergy saw me so young,

they appeared astonished. Those to whom I opened my state, told me, "that I could never enough thank God for the graces conferred on me; that if I knew them I should be amazed at them; and that if I were not faithful, I should be the most ungrateful of all creatures." Some declared that they never knew any woman whom God held so closely, and in so great a purity of conscience. I believe what rendered it so, was the continual care thou hadst over me, oh my God, making me feel thy intimate presence, even as thou hast promised it to us in thy gospel, "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The continual experience of thy presence in me was what preserved me. I became deeply assured of what the prophet hath said, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Thou, oh my Lord, wast my faithful keeper, who didst continually defend my heart against all kinds of enemies preventing the least faults, or correcting them when vivacity had occasioned their being committed. But alas! when left to myself, how weak was I, and how easily did my enemies prevail over me! Let others ascribe their victories to their own fidelity; as for me, I shall never attribute them to any thing else than thy paternal care over me. I have too often experienced to my cost, what I should be without thee, to presume in the least on any cares of my own. It is to thee, and thee only, that I owe every thing, oh my deliverer; and it is an infinite joy to me that I am indebted to thee for it.

While I was at Paris, I relaxed in my usual exercises, on account of the little time I had, and the dryness and distress which had seized my heart, the hand which sustained me being hid, and my beloved withdrawn. I did many things which I should not; for I knew the extreme fondness which some had for me, and suffered them to express it without checking it as I ought. I fell into other faults too, as

having my neck a little too bare, though not so much as others had. I wept bitterly, because I plainly saw I was too remiss; and that was my torment. I sought all about for him who had secretly inflamed my heart. I enquired for tidings of him. But alas! hardly any body knew him. I cried, "Oh thou best beloved of my soul! hadst thou been near me these disasters had not befallen me. *Tell me where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon*, in the bright day of eternity, which is not, like the day of time, subject to night and eclipses?" When I say, that I spoke thus to him I must explain myself. In reality it all passed almost in silence, for I could not speak. My heart had a language which was carried on without the sound of words, understood of its well-beloved, as he understands the language of the word ever eloquent, which speaks incessantly in the innermost of the soul. Oh sacred language! which experience only gives the comprehension of! let not any think it a barren language, an effect of the mere imagination. Far different; it is the silent expression of the Word in the soul. As he never ceases to speak, so he never ceases to operate. *Dixit et facta sunt*. He effects in the soul what he speaks in it. This is a substantial expressive word, which operates infinitely more than all that one can conceive: It continues for ever fixed and unchangeable, a word which is comprehended of him, in whom it is spoken, only by its effects. This ineffable word communicates to the soul, in which it resides, a facility of speaking without words; the language of the blessed in heaven; well understood among congenial spirits, even without the medium of words, diffusing among them the union of grace, peace, and sweetness; and productive of such benefits as nothing but experience can declare. Oh, if souls were pure enough, they would thus participate beforehand the language of heaven.



But this no creature can procure of itself ; for its silence, being only from its own efforts, would not have the effect of the grace which I am speaking of, not having the same principle. If people once came to know the operations of God, in souls wholly resigned to his guiding, it would fill them with reverential admiration and awe.

To return to my subject, from which I have departed, to follow the impetuosity of the spirit which makes me write, which will be likely to happen to me sometimes ; (wherefore, sir, I beg you to excuse the irregularity of this history which you have required of me, not being in a condition to write otherwise.)

As I saw that the purity of my state was like to be sullied by too great a commerce with the world, I made haste to finish what detained me at Paris, in order to return to the country. It is true, Oh my God, I felt that thou hadst given me strength enough to avoid the occasions of evil—but when I had so far yielded as to get into them, I found I could not resist the vain complaisances, and a number of other foibles which they ensnared me into. The pain which I felt after my faults was inexpressible, it was not an anguish that arose from any distinct idea or conception ; from any particular motive or affection, but a kind of devouring fire which ceased not, till the fault was consumed and the soul purified by it. It was a banishment of my soul from the presence of its beloved, its bridegroom. I could have no access to him, neither could I have any rest out of him, I knew not what to do. I was like the dove out of the ark, which finding no rest for the sole of her foot, was constrained to return to the ark ; but, finding the window shut, could only fly about it, without being able to enter. In the mean time, through an infidelity, which will for ever render me culpable, I strove to find some satisfactions without, but could not. This essay served to convince me of my folly, and of the vanity of those pleasures

which are called innocent. When I was prevailed on to taste them, I felt a strong repulse, which, joined with my remorse for the transgression, changed the diversion into torment. "Alas! said I, this is not my God, and nothing else, beside him, can give solid pleasure."

One day, as much through unfaithfulness as complaisance, I went to take a turn at some of the public walks, rather from excess of vanity to shew myself there, than to take the pleasure of the place. Oh my God! How didst thou make me sensible of this fault? But far from punishing me in letting me partake of the amusement, thou didst it in holding me so close to thyself, that I could give no attention to any thing but my fault and thy displeasure. After this I was invited with some other ladies to an entertainment at *St. Cloud*: through vanity and weak compliance, I yielded and went. The regale was very magnificent; they, though wise in the eyes of the world, could relish it; but as to me, it was filled with bitterness. I could eat nothing, I could enjoy nothing, my disquiet appeared on my countenance. Oh, what tears did it cost me! For above three months my Beloved withdrew his favouring presence, and I could see nothing but an angry God for me.

I was, on this occasion, and in another journey which I took with my husband into Touraine, before I fell into the small-pox, like those animals destined for slaughter, which on certain days they adorn with greens and flowers, and bring in pomp into the city, before they kill them; this weak beauty, now on the eve of its decline, shone forth in new brightness, in order to become the sooner extinct.

One day as I walked to church, followed by a footman— in crossing a bridge, I was met by a poor man; I went to give him alms, he thanked me, but refused them, and then spoke to me in a wonderful manner of God and divine things; he displayed to me my whole heart—my love to God, my charity, my too great fondness for my beauty, and

all my faults; he told me it was not enough to avoid hell, but that God required of me the utmost purity and height of perfection. My heart assented to his reproofs—I heard him with silence and respect—his words penetrated my very soul; when I arrived at church I fainted away; but have never seen the man since.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

*Journey to Orleans and Touraine. Mother Granger encourages her in piety.*

AFTER this, my husband enjoying some intermission of his almost continual ailments, had a mind to go to Orleans, and from thence into Touraine. In this journey, my vanity made its last blaze. I received abundance of visits and applauses. But how clearly did I perceive the folly of men, who are so taken with vain beauty! I disliked the passion, yet not that in myself which caused it, though I sometimes ardently desired to be delivered from it. The continual combat of nature and grace cost me no small affliction. Nature was pleased with public applause; but grace made me dread it. What augmented the temptation was, that they esteemed in me virtue, joined with youth and beauty; not knowing that all the virtue was only in God, and his protection, and all the weakness in myself.

I went in search of confessors, to accuse myself of my failings, and to bewail my backslidings: But they were utterly insensible of my pain. They esteemed what God condemned. They treated as a virtue, what appeared to me detestable in thy sight. Far from measuring my faults by thy graces, they only considered what I was, in comparison to what I might have been: hence, instead of blaming me, they only flattered my pride, and justified me in

what incurred thy rebuke; or only treated as a slight fault what in me was highly displeasing to thee, from whom I had received such signal mercies.

The heinousness of sins is not to be measured singly by their nature, but also by the state of the person who commits them; as the least unfaithfulness in a spouse, is more injurious to her husband, than far greater ones in his domestics. I told them all the trouble I had been under, for not having entirely covered my neck; though it was covered much more than by other women of my age. They assured me that I was very modestly dressed: and as my husband liked my dress, there could be nothing amiss in it. My inward director taught me quite the contrary; but I had not courage enough to follow him, and to dress myself differently from others, at my age. Beside, my vanity furnished me with pretences seemingly just, for following the mode. Oh, if Pastors knew what hurt they do in humouring female vanity, they would be more severe against it. Had I but found one honest enough to deal plainly with me, I should not have gone on thus; no, not for a moment. But my vanity, siding with the declared opinion of others, induced me to think them in the right, and my own scruples to be only mere fancy.

We met with accidents in this journey, sufficient to have terrified any one; and though corrupt nature prevailed so far as I have just mentioned, yet my resignation to God was so strong, that I passed fearless, even where there was apparently no possibility of escape. At one time, we got into a narrow pass, and did not perceive, until we were too far advanced to draw back, that the road was undermined by the river Loire, which ran beneath, and the banks had fallen in; so that in some places the footmen were obliged to support one side of the carriage. All around me were terrified to the highest degree, yet God kept me perfectly tranquil, and I secretly rejoiced in the prospect of losing

my life by a singular stroke of his providence. During this journey, I sometimes was faulty in indulging my sight with rare and curious objects.

On my return, I went to see Mrs. Granger, to whom I related how it had been with me while abroad. She strengthened and encouraged me to pursue my first design, and advised me to cover my neck entirely, which I have done ever since, notwithstanding the singularity of it.

God who had so long deferred the chastisement merited by such a series of infidelity, now began to punish me with double rigour for the abuse of his grace. Sometimes I wished to retire to a convent, and thought it lawful, as I judged it impossible to correspond so fully with the divine operations, whilst engaged in worldly matters. I found wherein I was weak, and that my faults were always of the same nature; it was therefore I sought so ardently to shun the occasion. I wished to hide myself in some cave, or to be confined in a dreary prison, rather than enjoy a liberty by which I suffered so much. Divine love gently drew me inward, and vanity dragged me outward, and my heart was rent asunder by the contest, as I neither gave myself wholly up to the one or the other.

I besought my God to deprive me of power to displease him, and cried,—Art thou not strong enough wholly to eradicate this unjust duplicity out of me!—For my vanity broke forth when occasions offered; yet I quickly returned to God, and he instead of repulsing or upbraiding me, often received me with open arms, and gave me fresh testimonials of his love, which filled me with the most anguishing reflections on my offence; for though this wretched vanity was still so prevalent, yet my love to God was such, that after my wanderings, I would rather have chosen his rod than his caresses. His interests, so to speak, were more dear to me than my own, and I wished he would have done himself justice upon me. My heart was full of grief and of

love, and I was stung to the quick for offending him, who showered his grace so profusely upon me. That those who know not God should offend him by sin, is not to be wondered at, but that a heart which loved him more than itself, and so fully experienced his love, that this heart should be seduced by propensities which it detests, is a most cruel martyrdom, rendered inexpressibly afflicting by its long continuance.

When I felt most strongly thy presence, and thy love, oh my God, said I, how wonderfully thou bestowest thy favours on such a wretched creature, who requites thee only with ingratitude. For if any one reads this life with attention, he will see on God's part nothing but goodness, mercy, and love; and on my part, nothing but weakness, sin, and infidelity. If there be any thing that is good, it is thine, O my God! As for me I have nothing to glory in but my infirmities and my unworthiness, since, in that everlasting marriage-union thou hast made with me, I brought with me nothing but weakness, sin, and misery. Oh my Lord! how I rejoice to owe all to thee, and that thou favourest my heart with a sight of the treasures and boundless riches of thy grace and love! Thou hast dealt by me, as if a magnificent king should marry a poor slave, forget her slavery, give her all the ornaments which may render her pleasing in his eyes, and freely pardon her all the faults and ill qualities which her ignorance and bad education had given her. This thou hast made my case. My poverty is become my riches, and in the extremity of my weakness I have found my strength. Oh if any knew, with what confusion the indulgent favours of God, cover the soul after its faults!—It is inconceivable. Such a soul would wish with all its power, to satisfy the divine justice. I made verses and little songs to bewail myself. I exercised austerities, but they did not satisfy my heart. They were like those drops of water which only serve to make the fire hotter. When

I take a view of God, and myself, I am obliged to cry out, "Oh admirable conduct of love toward an ungrateful wretch! Oh horrible ingratitude toward such unparalleled goodness!" A great part of my life is only a mixture of such things as might be enough to sink me to the grave betwixt grief and love!

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## CHAPTER XV.

*She and her three children are dangerously seized with the small-pox, her husband at the same time confined with the gout. Death of her youngest son. Barbarous cruelty of her mother-in-law.*

ON my arrival at home, I found my husband seized with the gout, and his other complaints; my little daughter ill, and like to die of the small-pox; my eldest son too, took it, and had such a vast quantity, and of so malignant a nature that it rendered him as disfigured, as before he had been beautiful. As soon as I perceived the small-pox was in the house, I had no doubt but I should take it. Mrs. Granger advised me timely to remove, if I could. My father offered to take me home, with my second son, whom I tenderly loved. But my mother-in-law would not suffer it. She persuaded my husband it was useless, and sent for a physician, who seconded her in it, saying, "I should as readily take it at a distance as here, if I was disposed to take it." I may say, she proved at that time a second *Jephtha*, and that she sacrificed us both, though innocently. Had she known what was to follow, I doubt not but she would have acted otherwise. All the town stirred in this affair. Every one begged her to send me out of the house, and cried out that it was cruel to expose me thus. They set upon me too, imagining I was unwilling to go; for I had not told that she was so averse to it. I had at that time no other disposition,

than to sacrifice myself to divine providence ; and though I might have removed, notwithstanding my mother-in-law's resistance, yet I would not without her consent ; because it looked to me, as if her resistance was an order of heaven. Oh divine will of my God ! thou wast then my only life in the midst of all my miseries.

I continued in this spirit of sacrifice to God, waiting from moment to moment in an entire resignation, for whatever he should be pleased to ordain. I cannot express what nature suffered ; for I was like one who sees both certain death and an easy remedy, without being able to avoid the former, or try the latter. I had no less apprehension for my younger son, than for myself : My mother-in-law so excessively doated on the eldest, that the rest of us were indifferent to her : Yet I am assured, if she had known that the younger would have died with the small-pox, she would not have acted as she did.. God makes use of creatures, and their natural inclinations, to accomplish his designs. When I see in the creatures a conduct which appears unreasonable and mortifying, I mount higher, and look upon them as instruments both of the justice and mercy of God ; for his justice is full of mercy.

When I told my husband that my stomach was sick, and that I was taking the small-pox ; he said, it was only imagination. I let Mrs. Granger know the situation I was in. As she had a tender heart, she was affected by the treatment I met with, and encouraged me to offer myself up to the Lord. At length nature finding there was no resource, consented to the sacrifice which my spirit had already made. The disorder gained ground apace, I was seized with a great shivering, and a pain both in my head and stomach. They would not yet believe that I was sick, but in a few hours it went so far, that they thought my life in danger ; for I was also taken with an inflammation on my lungs, and the remedies for the one disorder were contrary



to the other. My mother-in-law's favourite physician was not in town, nor the resident surgeon. Another surgeon was sent for, who said, "I must be bled;" but my mother-in-law would not suffer it at that time to be done. So little attendance was paid me, that I was on the point of death for want of proper assistance. My husband, not being able to see me, left me entirely to his mother. She would not allow any but her own physician to prescribe for me, and yet did not send for him, though he was within a day's journey of us. In this extremity I opened not my mouth to request any succour. I looked for life or death from the hand of God, without testifying the least uneasiness, at such extraordinary conduct. The peace I enjoyed within, on account of that perfect resignation, in which God kept me by his grace, was so great, that it made me forget myself, in the midst of such violent and oppressive disorders.

But God's protection was indeed wonderful. How oft have I been reduced to extremity, yet he never failed to succour, when things appeared most desperate. It pleased him so to order it, that a skilful surgeon, who had attended me before, passing by our house, enquired after me. They told him I was extremely ill. He alighted immediately, and came in to see me. Never was man more surprized, when he saw the frightful condition I was in. The small-pox, which could not come out, had rendered some parts of my face quite black. But I was no ways alarmed; for at that time, I could have made a sacrifice of all things, and was pleased that God should avenge himself on that face, which had betrayed me into so many infidelities. He was so affrighted that he could not hide his surprise, and went into my mother-in-law's chamber, and told her, "it was most shameful, to let me die in that manner, for want of bleeding." She still opposed it so violently, that in short she told him flatly, "She would not suffer it, until the

physician returned." He flew into such a rage, at seeing me thus left without sending for the physician, that he reproved my mother-in-law in the severest manner ; but all in vain still. Upon that he came up again presently into my chamber, and said, " If you choose, I will bleed you, and save your life." I held out my arm to him ; and, though it was extremely swelled, he bled me in an instant. My mother-in-law was in a violent passion about it. The small-pox came out immediately ; and he ordered that they should get me bled again in the evening, but she would not suffer it ; and for fear of displeasing my mother-in-law, and through a total resignation of myself into the hands of God, I durst not retain him, whatever occasion I had for it.

I am the more particular in this relation, to shew how advantageous it is to resign ourselves to God without reserve. Though in appearance he leaves us for a time, to prove and exercise our faith, yet he never fails us, when our need of him is the more pressing : One may say with the Scripture, " It is God who bringeth down to the gates of death, and raiseth up again. The blackness and swelling of my face went off, and I believe, had they continued to bleed me, I had been pretty easy ; but for want of that, I grew worse again. The malady fell into my eyes, and inflamed them with such severe pain, that I thought I should lose them both.

I had those violent pains for three weeks, during which I got very little sleep. I could not shut my eyes, they were so full of the small-pox, nor open them by reason of the pain I endured. There was the greatest probability that I should lose my sight, but I was wholly reconciled to the loss ; my throat, palate, and gums, were likewise so filled with the pock, that I could not swallow broth, or take any nourishment, without suffering extremely. My whole body looked like that of a leper. All that saw me said, they had never seen such a shocking spectacle. But as to

my soul, it was kept in a contentment not to be expressed. The hopes of its liberty, by the loss of that beauty, which had so frequently brought me under bondage, rendered me so well satisfied, and so united to God, that I would not have changed my condition for that of the most happy Prince in the world.

Every one thought I would be inconsolable ; and several expressed their sympathy in my sad condition, as they judged it ; while I lay still, in the secret fruition of a joy unspeakable, in this total deprivation of what had been a snare to my pride, and to the passions of men. I praised God in profound silence. None ever heard any complaint from me, either of my pains or the loss I sustained. All was well received as from God's hand. The only thing that I said was, that I rejoiced at, and was exceeding thankful for the interior liberty I gained thereby ; and they construed this as a great crime. My confessor, who had been dissatisfied with me before, came to see me. He asked me if I was not sorry for having the small pox ; and he now taxed me with pride for my answer.

My youngest little boy took the distemper the same day with myself, and died for want of care. This blow indeed struck me to the heart, but yet, drawing strength from my weakness, I offered him up, and said to God as Job did, "Thou gavest him to me, and thou takest him from me. Blessed be thy holy name." The spirit of sacrifice possessed me so strongly that, though I loved this child tenderly, I never shed a tear at hearing of his death. The day he was buried, the doctor sent to tell me he had not placed a tombstone upon his grave, because my little girl could not survive him two days. My eldest son was not yet out of danger, so that I saw myself stripped of all my children at once, my husband indisposed, and myself extremely so. God did not take my little girl then. He prolonged her life some years, to make the loss more painful to me.

At last my mother-in-law's physician arrived, at a time wherein he could be but of little service to me. When he saw the strange inflammation in my eyes, he bled me several times ; but it was too late. And those bleedings, which would have been so proper at first, did nothing but weaken me now. They could not even bleed me in the condition I was, but with the greatest difficulty ; for my arms were so swelled, that the surgeon was obliged to push in the lance to a great depth. Moreover, the bleeding being out of season, had like to have caused my death, this I confess, would have been very agreeable to me. I looked upon death as the greatest blessing for me. Yet I saw well I had nothing to hope on that side ; and that, instead of meeting with so desirable an event, I must prepare myself to support the trials of life.

After my eldest son was grown better, he got up and came into my chamber. I was surprized at the extraordinary change I saw in him. His face, lately so fair and beautiful, was become like a coarse spot of earth, all full of furrows. This gave me the curiosity to view myself in the looking-glass. I felt myself shocked, for I saw that God had ordered the sacrifice in all its reality.

Some things now fell out by the contrariety of my mother-in-law, that caused me severe crosses, and put the finishing stroke to my son's face. However, my heart was firm in my God, and strengthened itself by the number and greatness of my sufferings. I was as a victim incessantly offered upon the altar, to Him who first sacrificed himself for love.—*What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me ? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.* These words, I can truly say, Oh my God, have been the delight of my heart, and have had their effect on me, through my whole life ; for I have been continually heaped with thy blessings and thy cross. My principal attraction, beside that of suffering for

thee, has been to yield myself up without resistance, interiorly and exteriorly, to all thy divine disposals ; and these gifts which I was favoured with from the beginning, have continued and increased until now,—for thou hast thyself guided my continual crosses, and led me through paths impenetrable to all but thee.

They sent me pomatums to recover my complexion, and to fill up the hollows of the small-pox. I had seen wonderful effects from it upon others, and therefore at first had a mind to try them: But Love, jealous of his work, would not suffer it. There was a voice in my heart which said, “If I would have had thee fair, I should have left thee as thou wert.” I was therefore obliged to lay aside every remedy, and to go into the air, which made the pitting worse, and to expose myself in the streets to the eyes of every one, when the redness of the small-pox was at the worst, in order to make my humiliation triumph, where I had exalted my pride.

My husband kept his bed almost all that time, and made good use of his indisposition. Only, as he now lost that which before had given him so much pleasure in viewing me, he grew much more susceptible of impressions which any gave him against me. In consequence of this, the persons who spoke to him to my disadvantage, finding themselves now better hearkened to, spoke more boldly and more frequently. There was only thou, oh my God, who changed not for me. Thou redoubled thy interior graces, in proportion as thou augmented my exterior crosses.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*The account of her domestic persecutions continued.*

My waiting-maid became every day more haughty : and as the devil incited her to torment me, seeing that her scoldings and outcries did not now torment me, she thought, if she could hinder me from going to the communion, she should give me the greatest of all vexations. She was not mistaken, oh Divine Spouse of pure souls, since the only satisfaction of my life was to receive and to honour thee. I procured, as much as was in my power, the churches to be well adorned. I gave every thing, of the finest I had, to furnish them with ornaments, and contributed to the utmost extent of my abilities, to make them have silver plates and chalices. "Oh my Love, I cried, let me be thy victim ! Spare nothing to annihilate me." I felt an inexpressible longing to be more reduced, and to become, as it were, a Nothing.

This girl then knew my affection for the holy sacrament, where, when I could have liberty for it, I passed several hours on my knees.\* She took it in her head to watch me daily. When she discovered my going thither, she ran to tell my mother-in-law and my husband. There needed no more to chagrin them. Their invectives lasted the whole day. If a word escaped me in my own justification, it was enough to make them say, I was guilty of sacrilege, and to raise an outcry against all devotion. If I made them no answer at all, that still heightened their indignation, and made them say the most grating things they could devise. If I fell sick, which often happened, they took occasion to come to quarrel with me in my bed, saying, my commu-

\* The Churches in France are commonly open, and the Communion Table laid out, so that persons have continually an opportunity of resorting there, and performing their devotions as in private.

nions and prayers were what made me sick ; as if there had been nothing else could make me ill, but my devotions to thee, oh my Lord !—

She told me one day in her passion, that she was going to write to him who she thought was my director, to get him to stop me from going to the communion, for that he did not know me. And when I made her no answer, she cried out as loud as she could, “ that I treated her ill and despised her.” When I went out to go to prayers, (though I had taken care before to order every thing about the house) she ran to tell my husband that I was going abroad, and had left nothing in order. When I returned home, rage fell on me in all its violence ; they would hear none of my reasons, but said, “ they were all a pack of lies.” My mother-in-law persuaded my husband, “ that I let every thing go to wreck, and that if she did not take care, he would be ruined.” He believed it, and I bore all with patience, endeavouring, as well as I could, to do my duty. What gave me the most trouble was the not knowing what course to take ; for when I ordered any thing without her, she complained “ that I shewed her no respect, that I did things of my own head, and they were done always the worse for it.” Then she would order them quite contrary : If I consulted her to know what, or how she would have any thing to be done, she said, “ she must have the care and trouble of every thing.”

I had scarce any rest but what I found in the love of thy will, oh my God, and submission to thy orders, however rigorous they might be. They incessantly watched my words and actions to find occasion against me. They chid me all the day long, continually repeating, and harping over the same things, and that even before the footmen. How often have I made my meals on my tears, which were interpreted as the most criminal in the world ! They said, I would be damned ; as if my tears would open a hell for

me, which surely they were more likely to extinguish. If I recited any thing I had heard, they would render me accountable for the truth of it. If I kept silence, they taxed me with contempt and perverseness; if I knew any thing without telling it, that was a crime; if I told it, then they said, "I had forged it." Sometimes they tormented me for several days successively, without giving me any relaxation. The love of God so closely possessed me, that it would not allow me to seek relief by a single word, or even by a look. Sometimes I said in myself, "Oh, that I had but any one who would take notice of me, or to whom I might unbosom myself, what relief to me would it be!" But it was not granted me.

Yet if I happened to be for some days free from the exterior cross, it was a most sensible distress to me, and indeed a punishment more difficult to bear than the severest trials. I then comprehended what St. Teresa says, "let me suffer or die." For this absence of the cross, was so grievous to me, that I languished with the ardency of desire for its return.—But no sooner was this earnest longing granted, and the blessed cross returned again, than strange as it may seem, it appeared so weighty and burdensome, as to be almost insupportable.

Though I loved my father extremely, and he loved me very tenderly, yet I never spoke to him of my sufferings. One of my relations, who loved me much, perceived the little moderation they used toward me. They spoke to me very roughly before him. He was highly displeased, and told my father of it, adding, that I should pass for a fool. Soon after I went to see my father, who, contrary to his custom, sharply reprimanded me, "for suffering them to treat me in such a manner, without saying any thing in my own defence, adding, every one talked of me for it; that it looked as if I had neither sense or spirit to vindicate myself." I answered, "If they remarked what my husband



said to me, that was confusion enough for me, without my bringing any more of it on myself by replies; that if they did not remark it, I ought not to cause it to be observed, nor expose my husband's weakness; that remaining silent stopped all disputes, whereas I might cause them to be continued and increased, by my replies." My father answered, "I did well, and that I should continue to act as God should inspire me:" and after that, he never spoke to me of it any more.

They were ever talking to me against my father, whom I most tenderly loved and respected; against my relations, and all such as I esteemed most. I felt this more keenly than all they could say against myself. I could not forbear defending them, and therein I did wrong; as whatever I said served only to provoke them. If any complained of my father or relations, they were always in the right. If any, whom they had disliked before, spoke against them, they were presently approved of. If any shewed friendship to me, such were not welcome. A relation, whom I greatly loved for her piety, coming to see me, they openly bid her be gone, or treated her in such a manner as obliged her to it, which gave me no small uneasiness. When any considerable person came, they would be speaking against me; even to persons who knew me not, which surprised them: but when they saw me they pitied me.

Whatever they said against me, love would not allow me to justify myself. I spoke not to my husband of what either my mother-in-law or the girl did to me, (except the first year, when I was not sufficiently touched with the power of God, to suffer such treatment.) Nay, I did more than this; for as my mother-in-law and my husband were both passionate, they often quarreled. Then I was in favour, and to me they made their mutual complaints. I never told the one what the other had said. And though it might have been of service to me, humanly speaking, to take the ad-

vantage of such opportunities, I never made use of them to complain of either: nay, on the contrary, I did not rest till I had reconciled them. I spoke many obliging things of the one to the other, which always made them friends again: though I knew by frequent experience, that I should pay dear for their re-union: for scarce were they reconciled, but they joined together against me.

I was so deeply engaged within, as often to forget things without, yet not any thing which was of consequence. My husband was hasty, and this inattention frequently irritated him. I walked into the garden, without observing any thing there: and when my husband, who could not go thither, asked me about it, I knew not what to say, at which he was angry. I went thither on purpose to remark every thing, in order to tell him about them; and yet when there, did not think of looking at them. I went ten times one day, to see and bring him an account of them, and yet still forgot it. But when I did remember to look at them, I was much pleased; yet it generally happened I was then asked nothing about them.

When they were telling any news; to mortify my curiosity, I used, under some pretext or other, to retire. When my husband afterward would be talking to me about it, I betrayed my ignorance of the matter, and then put him into a fresh fit of rage against me, which I would gladly have avoided being the occasion of; as I was very desirous of doing my duty, and rendering every thing agreeable to him, so far as it was in my power.

All my crosses would have seemed little, if I might have had liberty to pray, and to be alone. But I was obliged still to continue in their presence under such a subjection as is scarcely conceivable. My husband looked on his watch, if at any time I had liberty allowed me for prayer, to see if I stayed above half an hour. If I exceeded it, he grew very uneasy. Sometimes I said to him, "Grant me one

## LIFE OF LADY GUION.

hour to divert and employ myself as I have a mind." And though he would have granted it to me for other diversions, yet for prayer he would not. I confess, inexperience caused me much trouble, and I have often thereby given occasion for what they made me suffer: for ought I not to have looked on my captivity as an effect of the will of my God, to content myself therein, and to make contentment my only desire and prayer? But I often fell back again into the anxiety of wishing to get time for prayer; which was not agreeable to my husband. It is true, those faults were more frequent in the beginning. Afterwards, I prayed to God in his own retreat, in the temple of my heart, and then I went out no more.

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### CHAPTER XVII.

*Her husband building in the country, she attends him. Care of Divine Providence, exhibited in her being enabled to get to places of worship. Her son, encouraged by her husband and mother-in-law turns against her. Difficulties in attending her husband in his sickness.*

WE went into the country, where I committed many faults, letting myself go too much after my inward attraction. I thought I might do it then, because my husband diverted himself, with building. If I stayed from him any time, (which sometimes happened, as he was continually talking with the workmen,) he was dissatisfied. I set myself in a corner, and there had my work with me, but could scarcely do any thing by reason of the force of the interior attraction, which made the work fall out of my hands. I passed whole hours this way, without being able either to open my eyes, or know what passed in me; but I had nothing to wish for, nor yet to be afraid of. Every where I found my proper centre, because every where I found God.

My heart could then desire nothing but what it had ; for this disposition extinguished all its desires ; and I sometimes said to myself, " What wantest thou ? what fearest thou ? " And I was surprised to find upon trial that I had nothing to fear. Every place I was in was my proper place.

As I had generally no time allowed me for prayer but with difficulty, and would not be suffered to rise until seven o'clock, my bed being in my husband's room on account of his illness—I stole up at four, and kneeling in my bed, continued there while he thought me asleep, for I wished not to offend him, and strove to be punctual and assiduous in every thing. But this soon affected my health and injured my eyes, which were still very weak, it being but eight months since I had the small-pox. This loss of rest brought a heavy trial on me ; for as even my sleeping hours were much broken, by the fear of not waking in time, I insensibly dropped asleep at my prayers. Even the half hour allowed me after dinner, though I felt quite wakeful, yet drowsiness overpowered me. I endeavoured to remedy this by the severest bodily inflictions, but in vain.

As we had not yet built the chapel, and were far from any church, I could not go to prayers or sacrament, without the permission of my husband, and he was very reluctant to suffer me, except on Sundays and holydays : and as I could not go out in the coach, I was obliged to make use of some stratagems, and to get service performed very early in the morning, to which, feeble as I was, I made out to creep on foot, although it was a quarter of a league distance. And really God wrought wonders for me : for generally, in the mornings when I went to prayers, my husband did not wake till after I was returned : often, as I was going out, the weather was so cloudy, that the girl I took with me, said, " I could not go ; or if I did, I should be soaked with the rain." I answered her with my usual confidence, " God will assist us." I generally reached the chapel without

being wet : but when I had arrived there, the rain fell excessively. During several years that I have acted in this manner, I have never been deceived in my confidence in God. When I was in town, and could find nobody up to be seen, I was surprised that there came to me priests to ask me if I was willing to receive the communion, and that if I was, they would give it to me. I had no mind to refuse, oh my Lord, the opportunity which thou thyself offeredst me ; for I had no doubt of its being thee who inspired them to propose it. Before I had contrived to get divine service at the chapel, I have often suddenly awaked with a strong impulse to go to prayers. My maid would say to me, " But madam, you are going to tire yourself in vain. There will be no service there." For that chapel was not yet regularly served : however I went full of faith, and at my arrival have found them just ready to begin. If I could particularly enumerate the remarkable providences, which were hereupon given in my favour, there would be enough to fill whole volumes.

Through the assistance of Providence, I was also enabled to hear from mother Granger, although my mother-in-law wished to prevent it ; for on going to the door, I found a messenger with a letter from her, which could not have fallen into my hands but for that. But this is only a small instance of these kind of continual providences. She was the only person I could be free to lay open my state to, when I could get to see her, which was with the greatest difficulty ; having been not only prohibited from seeing her, both by my confessor and my husband, but all means, that could be devised, were put in practice by my mother-in-law to prevent it. I placed the greatest confidence in mother Granger. I concealed nothing from her, either of my sins or my pains. I would not have done the least thing without telling her. I did not now practise any austerities but those she was willing to allow me.

There was nothing I kept from her but my interior dispositions, these I was scarce able to tell, because I knew not how to explain myself thereon, being very ignorant of those matters, having never read or heard of them.

One day when they thought I was going to see my father, I went to see mother Granger. It was discovered, and cost me such crosses as I cannot express ; their rage against me, was so excessive, that it would be incredible. Even my writing to her was extremely difficult ; for as I had the utmost abhorrence of a lie, I forbade the footmen to tell any. When they were met, they were asked whither they were going, and if they had not any letters. My mother-in-law set herself in a little passage, through which those who went out must necessarily pass : and when any went by, she asked them whither they were going and what they carried. Sometimes going on foot to the *Benedictines*, I caused shoes to be carried, that they might not perceive by the dirty ones, that I had been far. I durst not go alone ; and those who attended me, had orders to tell every place I went to. If they were discovered to fail in doing it, they were either corrected or turned out of their service.

My husband and mother-in-law were always inveighing against that good woman, though in reality they esteemed her. I sometimes made my own complaint to her ; and she replied, " How should you content them, when I have been doing all in my power for these twenty years to satisfy them without success ?" For as my mother-in-law had two daughters under her care, she was always finding something to say against every thing she did in regard to them.

But the most sensible cross to me now was the revolting of my own son against me, whom they inspired with so great a contempt for me, that I could not see him, without causing me severe affliction. When I was in my chamber with some of my friends, they sent him to listen to what we

said ; and as he saw this pleased them, he invented a hundred things to tell them. If I caught him in a lie, as frequently I did, he would upbraid me, saying, "My grandmother says, you have been a greater liar than I." I answered him, "Therefore I know the deformity of that vice, and how hard a thing it is to get the better of it: and for this reason I would not have you suffer the like." He spoke to me things very offensive ; and because he remarked the awe I stood in of his grandmother and his father, if in their absence I found fault with him for any thing, he insultingly upbraided me, and said, "That now I wanted to set up for his mistress, because they were not there." All this they approved of, insomuch as to strengthen him in his most perverse inclinations. One day, he went to see my father, and rashly began talking against me to him, as he was used to do to his grandmother. But there it did not meet with the same reception. It affected my father to tears : he came to our house to desire he might be corrected for it. They promised it should be done, and yet they never did it. I was greatly afraid of the consequences of so bad an education. I told mother Granger of it, who consoled me, and said, "That since I could not remedy it, I must suffer, and leave every thing to God ; and that this child would be my cross."

Another great cross was the difficulty I had in attending my husband. I knew he was displeased when I was not with him ; and yet when I was with him, he never expressed any pleasure in it, or any thing I did. On the contrary, he only rejected with scorn whatever office I performed. He was so very uneasy with me about every thing, that I sometimes trembled when I approached him. I could do nothing to his liking ; and when I did not attend him, he was angry. He had taken such a dislike to soups, that he could not bear the sight of them ; and those that offered them, had so rough a reception, that neither his mother nor

any of the domestics would carry them to him. There was none but myself who did not refuse that office. I brought them to him, and let his anger pass: then tried in some agreeable manner to prevail on him to take them. And when his passion increased, I waited with patience, after which I said to him, "I had rather be reprimanded several times a day, than let you suffer by not bringing you what is proper." Sometimes he took them; at other times pushed them back. But as he saw my perseverance, he would at length submit to take them.

When he was in good humour, and I was carrying something agreeable to him, then my mother-in-law would snatch it out of my hands, and carry it herself. And as he thought I was not so careful and studious to please him, he would fly in a rage against me, and express great thankfulness to his mother. I silently suffered it all; I used all my skill and endeavours to gain my mother-in-law's favour by my assiduities, my presents, my services; but was not fortunate enough to succeed. How bitter and grievous, oh my God, would such a life be, were it not for thee? but thou hast sweetened and reconciled it to me. I had a few very short intervals from this severe and mortifying life; but these served only to make the reverses more keen and bitter.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Her first acquaintance with Father la Combe. Conversion of him and of three of his order. Her crosses at home continue. Her great charity to the poor.*

ABOUT eight or nine months after my recovery from the small-pox, Father la Combe, passing by our house, brought me a letter from Father de la Motte,\* recommending him to my esteem, and expressing the highest friendship for him. I hesitated much, for I was very loth to make new acquaintances, but the fear of offending my brother prevailed. After a short conversation, we both desired a farther opportunity. I thought that he either loved God, or was disposed to love him, and I wished every body to love him. God had already made use of me for the conversion of three of his order. The strong desire he had of seeing me again, induced him to come to our country-house, which was about half a league from the town. A little accident which happened, opened a way for me to speak to him. As he was in discourse with my husband, who relished his company, he was taken ill, and retired into the garden. My husband bade me go and see what was the matter with him. I went: he told me he had remarked in my countenance, a deep inwardness and presence of God, which had given him a strong desire of seeing me again: And God then assisted me to open to him the interior path of the soul, and conveyed so much grace to him through this poor channel, that he has owned to me since, that he went away, changed into quite another man. I preserved an esteem for him; for it appeared to me that he would be devoted to God; but little did I then foresee, that I should ever be led to the place where he was to reside.

\* He was a Bernabite, half brother of Lady Guion, by the father, a malevolent, selfish ecclesiastic, as we shall see in the second and third parts.

My disposition at this time, as I have said, was a continual prayer, without knowing it to be such ; for the presence of God was so plentifully given, that it seemed to be more in me than my very self. The sensibility thereof was so powerful, so penetrating, it seemed to me irresistible ; and love took from me all liberty of my own. At other times, I was so dry, I felt nothing but the pain of absence, which was the keener to me, as the divine presence had before been so sensible. In these alternatives, when love was present, I forgot in such a manner all my troubles and pains, that it appeared to me as if I never had experienced any : and, in its absence, it seemed as if it never would return again. I still thought it was through some fault of mine it was withdrawn, and that rendered me inconsolable. Had I known that it was a state through which it was necessary to pass, I should not have been troubled ; for my strong love to the will of God would have rendered every thing easy to me ; the property of this prayer being to give a great love to the order of God, with so sublime and perfect a reliance on him, as to fear nothing, whether dangers, thunder, spirits, or death. It gives a great abstraction from ourselves, our own interests and reputation, with an utter disregard to every thing of the kind ; all being swallowed up in the esteem of the will of God.

At home I was accused of every thing that was ill done, spoiled or broken. At first I told the truth, and said it was not me ; they persisted, and accused me of lying. I then made no reply. Besides, they told all their tales to such as came to the house. But when I was afterwards alone with the same persons, I never undeceived them. I often heard such things said of me, before my friends, as were enough to make them entertain a bad opinion of me. My mind kept its habitation in the tacit consciousness of my own innocence, not concerning myself whether they thought well or ill of me ; excluding all the world, all opinions or

censures, out of my view, and minding nothing else but the friendship of God only.

If through infidelity I happened at any time to justify myself, I always failed, and drew upon myself new crosses, both within and without: but notwithstanding all this, I was so enamoured with it, that the greatest cross of all would have been to be without any. When the cross was taken from me for any short space, it seemed to me that it was because of the bad use I made of it; and that my unfaithfulness deprived me of so great an advantage; for I never knew its value better than in its loss. Oh, dear cross, my faithful companion! as my Saviour became incarnate, only to die in thy arms, should not I be conformable to him in that: and wilt not thou be the means of uniting me to him for ever? O my Lord, I cried, punish me any way, but take not the cross from me: and the cross returned to me with so much the more weight, as my desire was more vehement. I could not reconcile two things, they appeared to me so very opposite: viz. to desire the cross with so much ardour, and to support it with so much difficulty and pain.

God knows well, in the admirable economy which he observes, how to render the crosses more weighty, according to the ability of the creature to bear them; giving them always something new and unexpected. Hereby my soul began to be more resigned, and to comprehend that the state of absence, and of wanting what I longed for, was in its turn, more profitable than that of always abounding, because the latter nourished *self-love*. If God did not act thus, the soul would never die to itself. That principle of self-love is so crafty and dangerous, that it cleaves to every thing.

What gave me most uneasiness, in this time of darkness, and crucifixion, both within and without, was an inconceivable readiness to be quick and hasty. When any an-

swer a little too lively escaped me, (which served not a little to humble me,) they said, "I was fallen into a mortal sin." A conduct no less rigorous than this was quite necessary for me; for I was so proud, passionate, and of a humour naturally thwarting, wanting always to carry matters my own way, and thinking my own reasons better than those of others; that, hadst thou, oh my God! spared the strokes of thy hammer, I should never have been formed to thy will, to be an instrument for thy use; for I was ridiculously vain. Applause rendered me intolerable. I praised my friends to excess, and blamed others without reason: but the more criminal I have been, the more I am indebted to thee, and the less of any good can I attribute to myself. Oh, how blind are men, who attribute to others the holiness that God gives them! I believe, my God, that thou hast had children, who under thy grace, owed much to their own fidelity; but as for me, I owe all to thee; I glory to confess it; I cannot acknowledge it too much.

In acts of charity I was very assiduous. So great was my tenderness for the poor, that I wished to have supplied all their wants; I could not see their necessity, without reproaching myself for the plenty I enjoyed. I deprived myself of all I could to help them. The very best at my table was distributed among them. There were few of the poor where I lived, who did not partake of my liberality. It seemed as if thou hadst made me thy only almoner there, for being refused by others, they came all to me. "Oh my divine Love! I cried, it is thy substance; I am only the steward of it. I ought to distribute it according to thy will." I found means to relieve them, without letting myself be known, because I had one who dispensed my alms privately. When there were families who were ashamed to take it in this way, I sent it to them as if I owed them a debt. I clothed such as were naked, and caused young girls to be taught how to earn their livelihood, especially such as were

handsome; to the end that being employed and having whereon to live, they might not be under a temptation to throw themselves away. God made use of me to reclaim several from their disorderly lives; and there was one of beauty and distinction, who has since made a happy end. I went to visit the sick, to comfort them, to make their beds. I made ointments, dressed their wounds, buried their dead. I privately furnished tradesmen and mechanics wherewith to keep up their shops. My heart was much opened toward my fellow-creatures in distress; And few indeed could carry charity much farther than our Lord enabled me to do, according to my state, both while married and since.

To purify me the more from the mixture I might make of his gifts with my own *self-love*, he gave me interior probations, which were very heavy. I began to experience an insupportable weight, in that very piety which had formerly been so easy and delightful to me: not that I did not love it extremely, but I found myself defective in that noble practice of it, to which I aspired. The more I loved it, the more I laboured to acquire what I saw I failed in. But alas! I seemed continually to be overcome by that which was contrary to it. My heart, indeed, was detached from all sensual pleasures. For these several years past, it has seemed to me that my mind is so detached and absent from the body, that I do things as if I did them not. If I eat or refresh myself, it is done with such an absence, or separation, as I wonder at, and with an entire mortification of the keenness of sensation in all the natural functions.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*A grievous malady. A journey to Paris. Death of her father. Early piety of her daughter, and her sudden death.*

To resume the thread of my history, the small-pox had so much hurt one of my eyes, that it was feared I should lose it. The gland at the corner of my eye was much injured. An imposthume arose from time to time between the nose and the eye, which gave me exquisite pain till it was lanced. It swelled all my head to that degree, that I could not bear even a pillow. The least noise was an agony to me, though sometimes they made a great one in my chamber; and yet this was a precious time to me, for two reasons; the first, because I was left in bed alone, where I had a sweet retreat without interruption; the other, because it answered the desire which I had for suffering, which desire was so great, that all the austerities of the body would have been but as a drop of water to quench so great a fire; and indeed the severities and rigours which I then exercised, were extreme—but they appeased not at all this appetite for the cross.—For it is thou alone, Oh crucified Saviour, who canst frame the cross, truly effectual for the death of self. Let others bless themselves in their ease or gaiety, grandeur, or pleasures, poor temporary heavens: as for me, my desires were all turned another way, even to the silent path of suffering for Christ, and to be united to him, through the mortification of all that was of nature in me, that my senses, appetites and will, being dead to these, might wholly live in him.

I obtained leave to go to Paris for the cure of my eye; and yet it was much more through the desire I had to see Monsieur Bertot, a man of profound experience, whom mother Granger had lately assigned to me for my director. I went to take my leave of my father, who embraced me

with peculiar tenderness, little thinking then that it would be our last adieu.

Paris was a place now no longer to be dreaded as in times past. The throngs only served to draw me into a deep recollection, and the noise of the streets but augmented my inward prayer. I saw Monsieur Bertot, who did not prove of that service to me, which he would have done if I had then had the power to explain myself: but though I wished earnestly to hide nothing from him, yet God held me so close to himself, that I could tell him scarcely any thing at all. As soon as I spoke to him every thing vanished from my mind, so that I could remember nothing but some few faults which I told him. As I saw him very seldom, and nothing stayed in my recollection, and as I read of nothing any way resembling my case, I knew not how to open myself upon it. Beside I desired to make nothing known, but the evil which was in me. Therefore Monsieur Bertot knew me not until after his death. This was of great utility to me, for taking away every support, and making me truly die to myself.

I went to pass the ten days, from the Ascension to Whitsuntide, at an abbey four leagues from Paris, the Abbess of which had a particular friendship for me. Here my union with God seemed to be deeper and more continual, becoming always simple, but at the same time more close and intimate.

. On the day of St. Erasmus, patron of that monastery, I awaked suddenly at four o'clock in the morning, with a strong impression on my mind, that my father was dead: and though at that time my soul was in very great contentment, yet my love for him affected it with sorrow, and my body with weakness. Under the strokes and daily troubles which befel me, my will was so subservient to thine, oh my God, that there seemed to be no will left in me but thine only. My own will disappeared, and no desires, ten-

dencies or inclinations were left, but to the one sole object of doing thy sacred pleasure, be it what it would. If I had a will, it appeared to me that it was with thine like two well tuned lutes in concert: that which is not touched renders the same sound as that which is touched: it is but one and the same sound, one pure harmony. It is this union of the will which establishes in perfect peace. Yet though my own will was lost, as to its operations, I have found since, in the strange conditions, I have been obliged to pass through, how much it had yet to cost me to have it totally lost as to all its properties in all the circumstances, and whole extent thereof, in order that the soul should retain no more any interest or desire of its own, of either time or eternity, but only the interest of God alone, in the manner that is known to himself, and not in our way of conceiving. How many souls are there which think their own wills quite lost, while they are yet very far from it! They would find they still subsist, if they met with hard probations. Who is there who does not wish something for himself, either of interest, wealth, honour, pleasure, convenience, liberty, &c.? And he who thinks his mind loose from all these objects, because he possesses them, would soon perceive his attachment to them, were he stripped of those he is possessed of. As I am not mistress of what I write, I follow not any order; but it is of little consequence.

In the afternoon as I was with the abbess, I told her I had strong presentiments of my father's death. Indeed I could hardly speak, I was so affected within and enfeebled without. Presently came one to tell her that she was wanted in the parlour. It was a man that had rode post and was come express, with an account from my husband, that my father was ill. And as I afterwards found it held him only twelve hours, he therefore was by this time dead. The Abbess returning says, "Here is a letter from your husband, who writes that your father is taken violently ill." I said



to her, "he is dead, I cannot have a doubt about it." I sent away to Paris immediately, to hire a coach, to go the sooner. Mine waited for me at the Midway, I went off at nine o'clock at night. They said, "I was going to destroy myself;" for I had no acquaintance with me; as I had sent away my maid to Paris, to put every thing in order there; and being in a religious house, I had no mind to keep any footman with me there. The abbess told me, "that since I thought my father was dead, it would be rashness in me to expose myself, and run the risk of my life in that manner; that coaches could hardly pass the way I was going, it being no beaten road." I answered, "That it was my indispensable duty to go and assist my father, and that I ought not, on a bare apprehension, to exempt myself from it." I then went alone, abandoned to providence, with people unknown. My weakness was so great, that I could hardly keep my seat in the coach, and yet I was often forced to alight, on account of dangerous spots in the road.

In this way I was obliged, about midnight, to cross a forest, notorious for murders and robberies. The most intrepid dreaded it; but my resignation left me scarce any room to think at all about it.—Oh what fears and uneasiness does a resigned soul spare itself!—Thus all alone, I arrived within five leagues of my own habitation, where I found my confessor who had opposed me, with one of my relations waiting for me. The sweet consolation I had enjoyed, when alone, was now interrupted. My confessor, ignorant of my state, restrained me entirely. My grief was of such a nature that I could not shed a tear. And I was ashamed to hear a thing which I knew but too well, without giving any exterior mark of grief. The inward and profound peace I enjoyed, dawned on my countenance, and the state I was in, did not permit me to speak, or to do such things as are usually expected from persons of piety. I could do nothing but love and be silent.

I found on my arrival at home, that my father was already buried, on account of the excessive heat. It was ten o'clock at night. All wore the habit of mourning.—I had travelled thirty leagues in a day and a night. As I was very weak, not having taken any nourishment, I immediately went to bed.

About two o'clock in the morning, my husband got up, and having gone out of my chamber, he returned presently, crying out with all his might, "My daughter is dead."—She was my only daughter, as dearly beloved as truly lovely. She had so many graces both of body and mind conferred on her, that one must have been insensible not to have loved her. She had an extraordinary share of love to God. Often was she found in corners at prayer. As soon as she perceived me at prayer, she came and joined me, and if she discovered that I had been praying without her, she would weep bitterly, and cry, "Ah mama, you pray but I dont." When we were alone, if she saw my eyes closed, she would whisper, "are you asleep," and then cry out, ah no, you are praying to our dear Jesus, and dropping on her knees before me, she would begin to pray too. She was several times whipt by her grandmother, because she said, "She would never have any other husband but our Lord," yet she could never make her say otherwise. She was innocent and modest as a little angel; very dutiful and endearing, and withal very beautiful. Her father doated on her, and to me she was very dear, much more for the qualities of her mind than those of her beautiful person. I looked upon her as my only consolation on earth: for she had as much affection for me, as her brother had aversion and contempt. She died of an unseasonable bleeding: but what shall I say? she died by the hands of Him who was pleased, for wise reasons, to strip me of all.

There now remained to me only the son of my sorrow. He fell ill, and was at the point of death, but was restored

at the prayer of Mother Granger, now my only consolation after God. I no more wept for my child than for my father. I could only say, "Thou, oh Lord, gave her to me; it pleases thee to take her back again, for she was thine." As for my father, his virtue was so generally known, that I must rather be silent, than enter upon the subject. His reliance on God, his faith and patience were wonderful. Both died in July, 1672. From henceforth crosses were not spared me: and though I have had abundance of them hitherto, yet they were only the shadows of those which I have since been obliged to pass through, pursuant to a marriage contract, which I had newly entered into with our Lord Jesus Christ. In this spiritual marriage, I claimed for my dowry only crosses, scourges, persecutions, ignominies, lowliness, and nothingness of self, which in his great goodness, and for wise ends, as I have seen, he has been pleased to grant and confer upon me.

One day, being in great distress, on account of the redoubling of outward and inward crosses, I went into my closet to give vent to my grief. M. Bertot, was brought into my mind, with this wish, *Oh that he was sensible of what I suffer!* Though he wrote but very seldom, and with great difficulty, yet he wrote me a letter dated this same day, about the cross, the finest and most consolatory he ever wrote me on that subject. Sometimes my spirit was so oppressed with continual crosses, which scarce gave me any relaxation, that when alone, my eyes turned every way to see if they could find any thing to give some relief. A word, a sigh, a trifle, or to know that any one took part in my grief, would have been some comfort; but that was not granted me, nor even to look toward heaven, or make any complaint. Love held me then so close, that it would have this miserable nature to perish, without giving it any support or nourishment.

Oh my divine Lord ! thou yet gave my soul a victorious support, which made it triumph over all the weaknesses of nature, and seized thy knife to sacrifice that nature without sparing. And yet this nature so perverse, and full of artifices to save its life, at last took the course of nourishing itself with its own despair, and with its fidelity under such heavy and continual oppression, and withal sought to conceal the value it attributed thereto. But the eyes of the Lord were too penetrating not to detect the subtilty of nature. Wherefore, thou, oh my Shepherd, changed thy conduct toward it. Thou sometimes comforted it with *thy crook and thy staff* ; that is to say, by thy conduct as loving as crucifying ; but it was only to reduce it to the last extremity, as I shall shew hereafter.

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#### CHAPTER XX.

*Conversion of a Lady of rank. Journey to Paris. Death of her father. Early piety of her daughter, and her sudden death.*

A LADY of rank, who I sometimes visited, took a particular liking to me, because, (as she was pleased to say) my person and manners were agreeable to her. She said that she observed in me something extraordinary and uncommon. I believe it was the inward attraction of my soul that appeared on my very countenance : for one day, a gentleman of fashion said to my husband's aunt, "I saw the lady, your neice ; and it is very visible that she lives in the presence of God." I was surprised at hearing this, as I little thought that such an one as he could know what it was to have God thus present. This lady, I say, began to be touched with the sense of God : for, wanting once to take me to the play, I refused to go ; (as I never went to plays,) making use of the pretext of my husband's continual indispo-

sitions. She pressed me exceedingly, and said, "I should not be prevented by his sickness from taking some amusement; and that I was not of an age to be confined with the sick, like a nurse." I told her my reasons for acting so by my husband. She then perceived that it was more from a principle of piety, than the indispositions of my husband, that I did not go. Insisting to know my sentiment of plays, I told her, "I entirely disapproved of them, and especially for a christian woman:" and as she was far more advanced in years than I was, what I then said made such an impression on her mind, that she never after went to them.

Being once with her and another lady, who was fond of talking, and had read the fathers, they spoke much of God. This lady spoke learnedly of him. I said scarce any thing, being inwardly drawn to silence, and troubled at such kind of conversation about God. My acquaintance, came next day to see me, "The Lord had so touched her heart, that she could hold out no longer." I attributed this to something the other lady had spoken; but she said to me, "Your silence had something in it which penetrated to the bottom of my soul: and I could not relish what the other said." Then we spoke to one another with open hearts.

It was then that God left indelible impressions of his grace on her soul, and she continued so athirst for him, that she could scarcely endure to converse on any other subject. That she might be wholly his, he deprived her of a most affectionate husband, and visited her by such severe crosses, and at the same time poured his grace so abundantly into her heart, that he soon became the sole master thereof. After the death of her husband, and the loss of most of her fortune, she went to reside four leagues from our house, on a small estate, which she had yet left. She obtained my husband's consent to my going to pass a week with her, to console her under her losses. God gave her by my means

all she wanted. She had a great share of understanding, but was surprised at my expressing things to her so far above my natural capacity. I should have been surprised at it myself, had I reflected on it: but it was God who gave me the gift for her sake, diffusing a flood of grace into her soul, without regarding the unworthiness of the channel he was pleased to make use of. Since that time her soul has been the temple of the Holy Ghost, and our hearts have been indissolubly united.

My husband and I took a little journey together; in which both my resignation and humility were exercised, yet without difficulty or constraint, so powerful was the influence of divine grace. We had all like to have perished in a river: the rest of the company in a desperate fright threw themselves out of the coach, which sunk in the moving sand. I continued so much inwardly occupied, that I did not once think of the danger. God delivered me from it without my thought of avoiding it. I was quite content to be drowned, had he permitted it. It may be said, "I was rash;" I believe I was so: Yet I rather chose to perish, trusting in God, than make my escape in a dependence on myself. But what say I? We do not perish, but for want of trusting in him. My pleasure is to be indebted to him for every thing. This renders me content in my miseries, which I would rather endure all my life long, in a state of resignation to him, than put an end to them, in a dependence on myself. However I would not advise others to act thus, unless they were in the same disposition which I was in at that time.

As my husband's maladies daily increased; he resolved to go to St. Reine, he appeared very desirous of having none but me with him, and told me one day, "If they never spoke to me against you, I should be more easy, and you more happy." In this journey I committed many faults of *self-love* and *self-seeking*; and being in a deep interior

resignation, experienced thereby what I should be without thy fatherly care, oh God. For some time past, thou hadst withdrawn from me that sweet correspondence which before I had only to follow. I was become like a poor traveller that had lost his way in the night, and could find no way, path, or track : But as I reserve for another place the description of the terrible darkness through which I passed, I shall here continue the thread of my history.

I had now no other child, except my first-born son, who was often at the gates of death; but soon after this period gave birth to another son. During the time of my confinement, I enjoyed great inward consolation. But how dear did this happy time cost me, since it was only a preparative to a total privation of several years, without any support, or hope of return! It began with the death of one who had been my only consolation after God. This was mother Granger. Before my return from St. Reine I heard she was dead. She died in a lethargy; and as they spoke to her about me, with a design to awake her, she answered, "I have always loved her in God, and for God;" and spoke no more.

When I received this news, I confess it was the most afflicting stroke I had ever felt. I thought, had I been with her at her death, I might have spoke, to her and received her last instructions; but God had so ordered it that I was deprived of her assistance in almost all my losses, in order to render the strokes more painful. Some months indeed before her death, it was shewn to me, that though I could not see her but with extreme difficulty, and suffering for it, yet she was still some support to me: and the Lord let me know that it would be profitable for me to be deprived of her: But at the time she died I did not think so. It was in that trying season, when my paths were all blocked up, she was taken from me, she who might have guided me in my lonesome and difficult road; bounded as it were with precipices, and entangled with briars and thorns.

Oh adorable conduct of my God! There must be no guide for the person whom thou art leading into the regions of darkness and death; no conductor for the man whom thou art determined to destroy, (*i. e.* to cause to die totally to himself.) After having saved me with so much mercy, O my Lord; after having led me by the hand in rugged paths, it seems thou wast bent on my destruction. May it not be said that thou dost not save but to destroy, nor go to seek the lost sheep, but to cause it to be yet more lost; that thou art pleased in building what is demolished, and in demolishing what is built. Thus thou wouldst overturn the temple built by human endeavours, with so much care and industry—in order as it were miraculously to erect a divine structure—a house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens.—Oh secrets of the incomprehensible wisdom of God, unknown to any besides himself!—Yet man, sprung up only of a few days, wants to penetrate, and to set bounds to it. Who is it that hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? It is a wisdom only to be known through death to every thing, and through the entire loss of all self.

My brother now openly shewed his hatred for me. He married at Orleans, and my husband had the complaisance to go to his marriage, though he was in a poor state of health, the roads bad, and so covered with snow, that we had like to have been overset more than fifteen times: and yet, far from appearing obliged by his politeness, my brother quarrelled with him more than ever, and without any reason too; and I was the butt of both their resentments. While I was at Orleans, meeting with one who at that time I thought highly of, I was too forward and free in speaking to him of spiritual things, thinking I was doing well, but had a remorse for it afterwards; which I so remembered, that I no more fell into the like fault again. How often do we mistake nature for grace! We must be en-



tirely dead to self, when such forwardness comes from God only.

On my return, my brother treated me with the utmost contempt. My mind was so much drawn inward, that although we had much more danger on the road than in going, I had no thought about myself, but only about my husband; so that seeing the coach overturning, I said, "Fear not, it is on my side that it falls; it will not hurt you." I believe, had all perished, I should not have been moved, my peace was so profound that nothing could shake it. If these times continued, we should be too strong. But they now began to come but seldom, and were followed with long and wearisome privations. Though since that time my brother is changed for the better, and has turned on the side of God, yet he has never turned to me, It has been by particular permission of God, and the conduct of his Providence over my soul, that has caused him and other religious persons, who have persecuted me, to think they were rendering glory to God, and doing actions of justice therein. And indeed what greater justice, than that all creatures should be treacherous to me, and declare against me, who have so often been treacherous to God!

After this there fell out a very perplexing affair. To me it caused great crosses, and seemed designed for nothing else. A certain person conceived so much malice against my husband, that he was determined to ruin him if possible. He found no other way to attempt it, but by entering into a private engagement with my brother; by which he obtained a power to demand, in the name of Monsieur, the king's brother, two hundred thousand livres, which he pretended to make appear that my brother and I owed him. My brother signed the processes, upon an assurance given him, that he should not pay any thing. I think his youth engaged him in what he did not understand. This affair so chagrined my husband, that I have room to believe it short-

ened his days. He was so angry with me, though I was innocent, that he could not speak to me but in a fury. He would give me no light into the affair, and I did not know in what it consisted. In the height of his rage, he said he would not meddle in it, but give me up my portion, and let me live as I could; with many other things still more grating. On the other side, my brother would not stir in it, nor suffer it to be done. The day when the trial was to come on, after prayers, I felt myself strongly pressed to go to the judges. I was wonderfully assisted herein, even so as to discover and unravel all the turns and artifices of this affair, without knowing how I could have been able to do it. The first judge, was so surprised to see the affair so very different from what he had thought it before, that he himself exhorted me to go to the other judges, and especially to the intendant, who was just then going to court, and was quite misinformed about the matter. God enabled me to manifest the truth in so clear a light, and gave such power to my words, that the intendant thanked me for having so seasonably come to undeceive, and set him to rights in the affair. Had I not done this, he assured me the cause had been lost. And as they saw the falsehood of every article, they would have condemned the plaintiff to the costs, if it had not been so great a prince, who lent his name to the officers that deceived him. But to save the honour of the prince, they ordered us to pay him fifty crowns. Hereby the two hundred thousand livres were reduced to only one hundred and fifty. My husband was exceedingly pleased at what I had done: but my brother appeared as outrageous against me, as if I had caused him some very great loss. Thus moderately, and at once ended an affair, which had at first appeared so very weighty and alarming.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Accounts of her inward condition.*

ABOUT this time I fell into a state of total privation, which continued near seven years. I seemed to myself cast down, as it were from a throne of enjoyment, like Nebuchadnezzar, to live among beasts; a deplorable state, yet of the greatest advantage to me, by the use which divine wisdom made of it. This state of emptiness, darkness, and impotency, went far beyond any trials I had ever yet met with. I have experienced since, that the prayer of the heart, when it appears most dry and barren, nevertheless, is not ineffectual nor offered in vain. For God gives what is best for us, though not what we most relish or wish for. Oh, were people but convinced of this truth; far from complaining all their life long, they would employ it only in making use, (by a crucified faithfulness and death,) of the situation God brings them into. Hence by causing us death, they would procure us life; for it is a wonderful thing, as all our happiness, spiritual, temporal and eternal, consists in resigning ourselves to God, leaving it to him to do in us and with us as he pleases, and with so much the more submission, as things please us less.—By this pure dependence on his Spirit, every thing is given us that we need; our very weaknesses, in his hand, prove a source of humiliation. If the soul were faithful to leave itself in the hand of God, sustaining all his operations, whether gratifying or mortifying, suffering itself to be conducted, from moment to moment, by his hand, and annihilated by the strokes of his providence, without complaining, or desiring any thing besides what it has; it would soon arrive at the experience of the eternal truth, though it might not know till late, the ways and methods by which God conducted it thereto.

But the misfortune is, that people want to direct God, instead of resigning themselves to be directed by him. They want to shew him a way, instead of passively following that wherein he leads them. And from hence, many souls, called to enjoy God himself, and not barely his gifts, spend all their lives in running after little consolations, and feeding on them ; resting there only, and making all their happiness to consist therein.

For you my dear children, if my chains and my imprisonment any way afflict you, I pray that they may serve to engage you to seek nothing but God, for himself alone, and never to desire to possess him, but by the death of your whole selves, never to seek to be something in the ways of the Spirit, but choose ye to enter into the most profound nothingness.

I had an internal strife, which continually racked me ;—two powers which appeared equally strong, seemed equally to struggle for the mastery within me. On the one hand, a desire of pleasing thee, oh my God, a fear of offending, and a continual tendency of all my powers to thee ;—and on the other side, the view of all my inward corruptions, the depravity of my heart, and the continual stirring and rising of self ; promptitude of spirit, and a dragging outward towards the creatures. Oh what torrents of tears, what desolations have these cost me ?—Is it possible, I cried, that I have received so many graces and favours from God, only to lose them ;—that I have loved him with so much ardour, but to be eternally deprived of him.—That his benefits have only produced my ingratitude,—his fidelity been paid by my infidelity ; that my heart has been emptied of all creatures, and created objects, and filled with his presence and love,—in order now to be wholly void of divine power, and only filled with wanderings and created objects.

I could now no longer pray as formerly. Heaven seemed shut to me, and I thought justly too. I could get no con-

solation, nor make any complaint thereupon ; nor had I any creature on earth to apply to, or to whom I might impart my condition. I found myself banished from all beings, without finding a support or refuge in any thing. I could no more practise any virtue with facility ; such as had formerly been familiar to me, seemed now to have left me. “ Alas said I, is it possible that this heart, formerly all on fire, should now become like ice ? ”—I often thought all creatures combined against me. Laden with a weight of past sins, and a multitude of new ones, I could not think God would ever pardon me, but looked on myself as a victim designed for hell. I would have been glad to do penances, to make use of prayers, pilgrimages, and vows. But still, whatever I tried for a remedy, seemed only to increase the malady. I may say, that tears were my drink, and sorrow my food. I felt in myself such a pain as I never could bring any to comprehend, but such as have experienced it. I had within myself an executioner who tortured me without respite. Even when I went to church, I was not easy there. To sermons I could give no attention ; they were now of no service or refreshment to me. I scarce conceived or understood any thing about them, even while hearing them. Heretofore, I had endured, pain with pleasure, and rejoiced at the sight of danger : but now a little of the former put me in a fret, and the shadow of the latter threw me into alarm.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Singular Providence. Death of her husband, after they had been married twelve years and four months. She regulates all affairs ; which, through his long indisposition, had been left in great confusion. She finishes a complicated affair, which is referred to her, to the satisfaction of all parties. She determines not to leave her mother-in-law, nor to part with her ill-tempered waiting-maid.*

As my husband drew near his end, his distempers had no intermission. No sooner was he in appearance, recovered from one, than he fell into another. The gout, fever, and gravel, succeeded each other. He bore great pains with much patience, offering them to God, and making a good use of them: yet his anger toward me increased, because reports and stories of me were multiplied to him, and those about him did nothing but vex him. He was the more susceptible of such impressions, as his pains gave him a stronger bent to vexation. At this time, the maid, who had used to torment me, sometimes took pity on me. She came to me as soon as I was gone into my closet, and said, "Come to my master, that your mother-in-law may not speak to him any more against you." I pretended to be ignorant of it all; but he could not conceal his displeasure, nor even suffer me near him. My mother-in-law at the same time kept no bounds. All that came to the house were witnesses of the continual scoldings, which I was forced to bear, and which I bore with much patience, notwithstanding my being in the condition I have mentioned.

My husband having, sometime before his death, finished the building of the chapel in the country, where we spent a part of the summer, I had the conveniency of hearing prayers every day, and of receiving the communion; but not daring to do it openly every day, the priest privately admitted me to the communion. They solemnized the dedica-

tion of this little chapel, and though I had already begun to enter into the condition I have described, yet when they began to bless it, I felt my heart suddenly glow with Divine love, which continued more than five hours, all the time of the ceremony, when our Lord made a new consecration of me to himself. I then seemed to myself a temple consecrated to him, both for time and for eternity: and said within myself, (speaking both of the one and the other) "May this temple never be profaned: May the praises of my God be sung therein for ever!" It seemed to me at that time as if my prayer was granted. But soon all this was taken from me, and not so much as any remembrance thereof, left to console me.

When I was at this country house, which was only a little place of retreat before the chapel was built, I retired for prayer to woods and caverns. How many times, here, has God preserved me from dangerous and venomous beasts! Sometimes, at unawares, I kneeled upon serpents, which were there in great plenty; and they fled away without doing me any harm. Once I happened to be alone in a little wood wherein was a mad bull. I had an antipathy for these animals, and they for me, to such a degree as to single me out among several persons, and run after me. Every one cried out for fear; but, without offering me the least hurt, he betook himself to flight. If I could recount all the providences of God, in my favour, it would appear wonderful: they were indeed so frequent and so continual, that I could not but be astonished at them. The favours of God are always showered on such, as have nothing wherewith to repay him. If there appears in the creature any fidelity or patience, it is God alone who gives it: if he ceases, for an instant to support, or if he seem to leave me to myself, I cease to be strong, and find myself weaker than any other creature. If my miseries shew what I am, his favours shew what he is, and the extreme necessity I am un-

der of ever depending on him.—But in writing I am frequently apt to wander.

At last, after having passed twelve years and four months in the crosses of marriage, as great as possible, except poverty, which I never knew, though I had much desired it, God drew me out of that state (after the manner I am going to relate) to give me still stronger crosses to bear, and of such a nature as I had never met with before; for if you give attention, sir, to the life which you have ordered me to write, you will remark that my crosses have been increasing till the present time, one being removed to give place to another to succeed it, still heavier than the former. Amidst the great troubles imposed upon me, when they said “I was in a mortal sin,” I had nobody in the world to speak to. I could have wished to have had somebody for a witness of my conduct; but I had not any. I had no support, no confessor, no director, no friend, no counsellor. I had lost all: and after God had taken from me one after another, he withdrew also himself. I remained without any creature; and to complete my distress, I seemed to be left without God himself; who alone could support me in such a deeply distressing state.

As to my husband, his illness grew every day more obstinate. He apprehended the approach of death, and even wished for it, so oppressive was the languishing life he dragged on. To his other ills was added, so great a dislike to every sort of nourishment, that he did not take any thing necessary to sustain life. There was none but myself that had the courage to get him to take what little he did. The doctor advised him to go into the country.—There, for a few days at first he seemed to be better, but he was suddenly taken more unwell. His patience increased with his pain. I saw plainly, he could not live long. It was a great trouble to me, that my mother-in-law kept me from him as much as she could, and infused into



him such a hatred for me, that I was much afraid he would die in it. I took a little time, when she happened not to be with him, and drawing near his bed, I kneeled down, and said to him, "That if I ever had done any thing that displeased him, I begged his pardon, assuring him it had not been voluntary." He appeared very much affected, and as he was just come out of a sound sleep, he said to me, "It is I who beg your pardon. I did not deserve you." After that time he was not only pleased to see me, but gave me advice what I should do after his death, telling me not to depend on the people on whom I now depended. He was for eight days very resigned and patient, though on account of the prevailing gangrene, he was cut and opened with a lance. I sent to Paris for the most skilful surgeon: but when he arrived my husband was dead.

No mortal could die in a more christian disposition, or with more courage than he did, after having received the sacrament in a manner truly edifying. I was not present when he expired; for out of tenderness he had made me retire: he was above twenty hours without sense, in the agonies of death. Thou didst order, oh my God, that he should die on Magdalen's eve, to shew me that I was to be wholly thine. I renewed every year, on Magdalen's day, the marriage-contract which I had made to thee, my Lord; and I found myself at that time free to renew it, and that most solemnly. It was in the morning on the 21st of July, 1676, that he died. After renewing my covenant, I was filled with great peace and joy, which was so much the more new to me, as for a long time past I had been plunged in the deepest bitterness.

As soon as I heard that my husband had just expired, "oh my God, I cried, Thou hast broken my bonds, and I will offer thee a sacrifice of praise." After that I remained in a deep silence, both exterior and interior, quite dry

and without any support. I could neither weep nor speak. My mother-in-law said very fine things, and was very much commended for it by every one. They were offended at my silence, which they attributed to want of resignation. A friar told me, that every one admired the fine acts which my mother-in-law did; that as for me, they heard me say nothing; that I must sacrifice my loss to God; but I could not say one single word, let me strive as I would.

I was indeed very much spent; for though I was but newly delivered of a daughter, yet I attended and sat up with my husband four-and-twenty nights before his death. I was more than a year, in recovering the fatigue, joined to my sore weakness and pains, both of body and of mind. The depression, or dryness and stupidity which I was in, was such that I could not say a word about God; it bore me down in such a manner, that I could hardly speak. However I entered for some moments into the admiration of thy goodness, oh my God, who had rendered me free, exactly on the day that I had taken thee for my spouse. I saw well that my crosses would not fail, since my mother-in-law had survived my husband. Also I was still tied, in having two children given me in so short a time before my husband's death; which has evidently appeared the effect of divine wisdom; for had I had only my eldest son left, I should have put him to the college; and then have gone into the convent of the *Benedictines*, and so stolen myself from the designs of God upon me.

I was willing to shew the esteem I had for my husband, in causing the most magnificent funeral to be made for him, at my own expense, that had ever been seen in that country. I paid off the legacies he had left. My mother-in-law violently opposed every thing I could do for securing my own interests. I had nobody to apply to for advice or help; for my brother would not give me the least assistance. I

was ignorant of affairs : but God, who, independent of my natural understanding, had always made me fit for every thing that pleased him, supplied me with such a perfect intelligence herein, that I succeeded. I omitted not the least punctilio, and was surprised that in these matters I should know without ever having learned. I arranged all my papers, and regulated all my affairs, without the least assistance from any one. My husband had abundance of writings deposited in his hands. I took an exact inventory of them, and sent them severally to their owners, which without divine assistance, would have been very difficult for me ; because my husband having been a long time sick, every thing was in the greatest confusion. This gained me the reputation of a skilful woman, as well as another affair which occurred :—

A great number of persons, who had been at law for several years, applied to my husband to settle their affairs. Though it was not properly the business of a gentleman, yet they applied to him, because he had both understanding and probity ; and as he had a love for several of them, he consented. There were twenty actions one upon another, and in all twenty-two persons concerned, who could not put any end to their differences, by reason of new incidents continually falling out. My husband charged himself with getting lawyers to examine their papers, but died before he could make any procedure therein. After his death, I sent for them to give them their papers : but they would not receive them, begging of me that I would accommodate them, and prevent their ruin. It appeared to me as ridiculous as impossible, to undertake an affair of so great consequence, and which would require so long a discussion : nevertheless, relying on the strength and wisdom of God, I followed the movement he gave me, to consent thereto. I shut myself up about thirty days in my closet, for all these affairs, without ever going out, but to mass and to my meals.

The arbitration being at length prepared, they all signed it, without knowing what it contained. They were all so well satisfied therewith, that they could not forbear publishing it every where. It was God alone who did those things; for when I had no more to do with those affairs, I knew nothing about them; and if I now hear any talk of such things, to me it sounds like Arabic.

My friends, and persons of the greatest distinction in the country, now came to advise me to remove from my mother-in-law: for though I never complained of her, every one knew her humour. I answered, that I should account it my place and duty to stay with her, if she would permit me. The view that was given me, was, not to go from the cross. Wherefore I resolved neither to leave my mother-in-law, nor put away the girl I have spoken of.

I hope sir, you will excuse my writing in so little order. I cannot do otherwise, on account of so many different things I have to mention, which I can only recite as they present themselves.

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

*Insolence of her waiting-maid. Persecutions from an Ecclesiastic.*

BEING now a widow, my crosses, which one would have thought should have abated, increased. That turbulent domestic I have so often mentioned, instead of growing milder, now she depended on me, became more furious than ever. In our house she had amassed a good fortune, and I settled on her, besides, an annuity for the remainder of her life, for the services she had done my husband. She swelled with vanity and haughtiness. Having been used to sit up so much with an invalid, she had taken to drink wine, to keep up her spirits. It had now passed

into a habit. As she grew aged and weak, a small matter got into her head. I tried to hide this fault ; but it grew to that height that it could not be concealed. I spoke of it to her confessor, in order that he might try, softly and artfully to reclaim her from it ; but instead of profiting by her director's advice, she was outrageous against me. My mother-in-law, who could hardly bear that fault, and had often spoken to me about it, now joined in reproaching me, and vindicating her. This strange creature, when any company came, would cry out with all her might, "that I had dishonoured her, thrown her into despair, and would be the cause of her damnation, as I was taking the ready course to my own : " Yet at this time God gave me an unbounded patience. I answered only with mildness and charity all her passionate invectives, giving her besides, every possible mark of my affection. If any other maid came to wait on me, she would draw her back in a rage, crying out, that "I hated her on account of the affection with which she had served my husband." When she had not a mind to come, I was obliged to serve myself ; and when she did come, it was to chide and make a noise. When I was very unwell, as was often the case, this girl would appear to be in despair. From hence I thought it was from thee, oh Lord, that all this came upon me ; for without thy permission, she was scarcely capable of such unaccountable conduct. She seemed not sensible of any faults, but always to think herself in the right. All those whom thou hast made use of to cause me to suffer, thought they were rendering service to thee in so doing.

I went to Paris on purpose to see Monsieur Bertot, who had been of very little service to me as a director. Not knowing my state, and I incapable of telling him it, he grew weary of the charge. At length he threw it up, and wrote to me to take another director. I made no doubt but God had revealed to him my wicked state ; and that

desertion of me seemed a most certain mark of my reprobation. This was during the life of my husband. But now my renewed solicitations, and his sympathy with me on my husband's death, prevailed on him to resume my direction, which to me still proved of very little service. I went to Paris on purpose to see him. When there, I went twelve or fifteen times to him, without being able to tell him any thing of my condition: I told him indeed I wanted some ecclesiastic to educate my son, to rid him of his bad habits, and of the wrong impressions he had conceived against me. He found one for me, of whom he had received very good recommendations.

I went to make a retreat\* with M. Bertot, and Madame de C. He spoke to me all the time not a quarter of an hour at most. As he saw that I said nothing to him, for indeed I knew not what to say, as I had not spoke to him of the favours which the Lord had conferred on me; (not from a desire to conceal them, but because the Lord did not permit me to do it, as he had over me only the designs of death) he therefore spoke to such as he looked upon to be more advanced in grace, and let me alone as one for whom there was nothing to be done. So well did God hide from him the situation of my soul, in order to make me suffer, that he wanted to refer me to certain considerations, thinking I had not the spirit of prayer, and that Mrs. Granger was mistaken in me, when she told him I had. I did what I could to obey him, but to me it was entirely impossible. On this account I was displeased with myself, because I believed M. Bertot, rather than my own experience. Through this whole retreat, my inclination, which I discerned only by the resistance I made to it, was

\* Many of the pious Romanists retire a day, a week, or a month, on some fixed season—secluding themselves entirely from all worldly business and connexions, in order to give up their whole time and heart to God in prayer, and this they call a retreat.

to rest in silence and nakedness of thought ; but in the settling of my mind therein, I feared I was disobeying the orders of my director : and this made me think that I was decayed and fallen off from grace. I kept myself in my state of nothingness, content with my poor low degree of prayer, without envying the higher one of others, which I judged myself unworthy of. I would have however desired much to do the will of God, and to advance more in religion, but despaired altogether of ever attaining that desirable end.

There was in the place where I lived, one whose doctrine was suspected ;\* he possessed a dignity in the church, which obliged me to have a deference for him. As he presently understood how averse I was to all who were suspected of unsoundness in the faith, and supposed that I had some credit in that place, he used his utmost efforts to engage me in his sentiments. I answered him with so much clearness and energy, that he had not a word to reply.— This increased his desire to win me over, and in order to it to contract a friendship with me. He continued to importune me two years and a half. As he was very polite, of an obliging temper, and had a good share of wit, I did not mistrust him, but even conceived a hope of his conversion, in which I found myself mistaken. I then ceased going near him. He came to enquire why he could see me no more. At that time he was so agreeable to my sick husband, in his assiduities about him, that I could not avoid his conversation ; though I thought the shortest and best way for me would be to break off all acquaintance with him, which I did after my husband's death, for M. Bertot would not permit me to do it before ; therefore, when he now saw that he could not renew it, he raised up strong persecutions against me, and stirred up those of his party.

These gentlemen had at that time a method amongst them, by which they soon knew who were of their party,

\* Most probably of Jansenism.

and who were opposite. They sent to one another circular letters, by means of which, in a very little time, they cried me down on every side, after a very strange manner. Yet this gave me little trouble. I was glad of my new liberty, intending never again to enter into an intimacy with any one, which would give me so much difficulty to break off.

The inability I was now in, of doing those exterior acts of charity I had done before, served this person with a pretext to publish that it was owing to him I had formerly done them; and that, having broke off from him, I now quitted them. Willing to ascribe to himself the merit of what God alone, by his grace, had made me do, he went so far as to preach of me publicly, as one who had been a bright pattern to the town, but was now become a scandal to it.—Several times he preached very offensive things. And although I was present at those sermons, and they were enough to weigh me down with confusion, for they offended all that heard them; I could not be troubled at it, for I carried in myself my own condemnation beyond utterance. I thought I merited abundantly worse than all he could say of me, and that, if all men knew me, they would trample me under their feet. My reputation was then blasted by the industry of this ecclesiastic; He caused all such as passed for persons of piety to declare against me. I thought he and they were in the right, and therefore quietly bore it all. Confused, like a criminal that dares not lift up his eyes, I looked upon the virtue of others with respect. I saw no fault in others, and no virtue in myself. When any happened to praise me it was like a heavy blow struck at me, and I said in myself, "They little know my miseries, and from what state I have fallen." When any blamed me, I agreed to it, as right and just. Nature wanted sometimes to get out of such an abject condition, but could not find any way; and if I tried to make an outward appearance of righteousness, by the practice of some good thing, my heart



in secret rebuked me as guilty of hypocrisy, in wanting to appear what I was not; and God did not permit that to succeed. Oh, how excellent are the crosses of Providence! all other crosses are of no value.

I was often very ill, and in danger of death, and knew not what to do to prepare myself for it. Several persons of piety, who had been acquainted with me, wrote to me about those things which the gentleman (above hinted at) spread about me, and I did not offer to justify myself, though I knew myself innocent of the things whereof they accused me. One day being in the greatest desolation and distress, I opened the new Testament, and chanced to meet with these words, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;" which for a little time gave me some relief.

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

*Considerable suitors offer to her, but in vain. She falls ill to the last extremity.*

ALL the sensibility which I had for the creatures, or things created, were now taken from me, even in an instant, as one takes off a robe, in such sort, that after that time I had none for any whatsoever. Though God had done me this favour, for which I never can be sufficiently grateful; I was however neither more contented nor less confused by it. He seemed to be so estranged, and displeased with me, that there remained nothing but the grief of having lost his blessed presence through my fault. The loss of my reputation every day increasing, (by means of that gentleman's party whom I have mentioned,) became more sensible to my heart, though I was not allowed to justify or bewail myself.

As I became always more impotent for every kind of exterior works, as I could not go to see the poor, nor stay at church, nor practice prayer, and as I became colder towards God, in proportion as I was more sensible of my wrong steps, all this destroyed me the more, both in my own eyes and in those of others. There were in the mean time some very considerable gentlemen who made proposals for me, and even such persons as according to the rules of fashion ought not to think of me. They presented themselves, during the very depth of my outward and inward desolation. At first it appeared to me a means of drawing me out of the vexation I was in. But it seemed to me then, notwithstanding my pains of body and mind, that if a king had presented himself to me, I should have refused him with pleasure, to shew thee, oh my God, that with all my miseries I was resolved to be thine alone; and that if thou wouldst not accept of me, I should at least have the consolation of having been faithful to thee, to the utmost of my power. For as to my inward state I never mentioned it to any body: I never spoke thereof, nor of the suitors, though my mother-in-law would say, "If I did not marry, it was because none would have me." It was sufficient for me, that thou, oh my God, knewest that I sacrificed them to thee, (without saying a word to any body) especially one whose high birth and amiable exterior qualities might have tempted both my vanity and inclination. Oh could I but have hoped, through those sacrifices and heavy afflictions to become agreeable to thee, such a hope would have been like a change from hell to heaven. But so far was I from presuming to hope for it, that I feared this sea of affliction might also be followed by everlasting misery, in the loss of thee. I durst not desire to enjoy thee, I only desired not to offend thee.

I was for five or six weeks at the last extremity. I could not take any nourishment. A spoonful of broth made me

faint. My voice was so gone that when they put their ears close to my mouth, they could scarcely distinguish my words. I threw up to the very chyle of my stomach. I could see no hope of salvation, yet could not be unwilling to die, as I bore a strong impression that the longer I should live the more I should sin. Of the two, I thought I rather chose hell than sin. All the good, which God made me do, now seemed to me evil, or full of faults. All my prayers, penances, alms and charities, seemed to rise up against me, and heighten my condemnation. I thought there appeared on the side of God, on my own, and from all creatures, one general condemnation, my conscience was a witness against me, which I could not appease; yet what may appear strange, the sins of my youth did not then give me any pain at all. They did not rise up in judgment against me, but there appeared one universal testimony against all the good I had done, and all the sentiments of evil I had entertained. If I went to confessors, I could tell them nothing of my condition; and if I could have told them, they could not have understood it. They would have regarded as eminent virtues, what, oh my God, thy eyes all pure and chaste, rejected as infidelity. It was then that I felt the truth of what thou hast said, that *thou judgest our righteousness*. Oh how pure art thou! who can comprehend it? It was then that I turned my eyes on every side, to see what way succour might come to me; but my succour could come no way, but from him who made heaven and earth. As I saw there was no safety for me, or spiritual health in myself, I entered into a secret complacency in seeing no good in myself whereon to rest, or presume for salvation. The nearer my destruction appeared, the more I found in God himself, wherewith to augment my trust and confidence, notwithstanding he seemed so justly irritated against me. It seemed to me, that I had in Jesus-Christ all that was wanting in myself. Oh Holy Jesus! I was

*that lost sheep of the house of Israel, whom thou wast come to save* : thou wast come to save her, who could find no salvation out of thee. Oh ye stout and righteous men ! observe as much as you please of excellence in what you have done to the glory of God. As for me, I glory only in my infirmities, since they have merited for me such a Saviour !

All my troubles, joined to the loss of my reputation, which yet was not so great as I apprehended, (it being only amongst a party) rendered me so unable to eat, that it seemed wonderful how I lived. In four days I did not eat as much as would make one very moderate repast. I was obliged to keep my bed through mere weakness, my body being no longer able to support the burden laid upon it. If I had thought, known, or heard tell, that there had ever been such a state as mine, it would have exceedingly relieved me : but my very pain appeared to me to be sin. Spiritual books, when I tried to read them, all contributed *only* to augment it ; for I saw in myself none of those *degrees* which they set down. I did not so much as comprehend them. And when they treated of the pains of certain states, I was very far from attributing any of them to myself. I said to myself, " These persons feel the pains of divine operations ; but as to me, I sin, and feel nothing but my own wicked state." I could have wished to separate the sin from the confusion of sin, and provided I had not offended God, all would have been easy to me.

See here a slight sketch of my last miseries, which I am glad to let you know, because in their beginning I omitted many infidelities, having had too much of an earnest attachment, vain complaisance, unprofitable and tedious conversations, though self-love and nature made a sort of necessity for them ; but toward the latter part, I could not have borne a speech too human, nor the least thing of the kind. God by an apparent evil, purified me from the real evil. Might I not then well sing with the church, " Oh happy sin, which has obtained such a Redeemer for me !"

## CHAPTER XXV.

*She is basely and unworthily treated by some of her mother-in-law's relatives. She and her mother-in-law re-united. In her absence her mother-in-law turns the waiting maid out of doors.*

THE first religious person that God made use of to draw me to himself, to whom (according to his desire) I wrote from time to time, wrote to me in the depth of my distress, desiring me to write to him no more, signifying his disapprobation of what came from me, and that I displeased God greatly. A father, a Jesuit, who had esteemed me much, wrote to me in like manner. No doubt, it was by thy permission, they thus contributed to complete my desolation. I thanked them for their charity, and commended myself to their prayers. It was then so indifferent to me to be decried by every body, even by the greatest saints, that it added but little to my pain. The pain of displeasing God, and the strong propensity I felt in myself to all sorts of faults, caused still my most lively and sensible pain.

I had been accustomed from the beginning to dryness and to privation.\* I even preferred it to the state of abounding, because I knew that I must seek God above all. I had even, at the first beginnings, an instinct of the innermost of my soul to pass over every manner of thing whatsoever, and to leave the gifts in order to obtain the giver: But at this time my spirit and senses were in such a manner struck, by thy permission, oh my God, who wast

\* For those unacquainted with the Lives and Writings of such deeply interior persons as Lady Guion, it may be particularly necessary, to throw in a few observations on this passage. She here treats of that severe purification, which precedes the total renewal of the soul in God,—its restoration to *all* it had lost in Adam; a state which the old Puritans called *transformation*, which the Mystics commonly call *the unitive state*, which some at present, term, *sanctification*, and which, in the Scriptures is also explained by different appellations, and strongly expressed by St. Paul,—*The fulness of the stature of the new man in Christ Jesus.*

pleased to destroy me without mercy, that the farther I went, the more every thing appeared to me a sin ; even crosses appeared to me no more crosses but real faults. I thought I drew them all on myself by my imprudent words and actions. I was like those, who, looking through a coloured glass, behold every thing with the same dye with which it is stained. Had I been able to do any exterior actions as formerly, or penances for my evil, it would have relieved me ; but, I was forbidden to do the latter, beside, I grew so timorous, and I felt in myself such a weakness, as made it appear impossible for me to do them ; I looked on them with horror, I found myself now so weak and incapable of any thing of the kind.

It seems I omit many things, both of providences of God in my favour, and of rugged paths through which I was obliged to pass : but as I have only one general view, I leave them in the knowledge of God only. Afterwards, being forsaken of my director, the coldness towards me which I remarked in the persons conducted by him, gave me no more trouble, nor indeed the estrangement of all the creatures, on account of my inward humiliation. My brother also joined with those who exclaimed against me, even though he had never seen them before. I believe it was God who conducted things this way, for my brother has worth, and undoubtedly thought he did well in acting thus.

I was obliged to go about some business to a town, where some near relations of my mother-in-law lived. How did I find things changed here ! When I was there before, they entertained me in a most elegant and obliging manner, regaling me from house to house, with emulation : but now they treated me with the utmost contempt, saying, they did it to revenge what I made their relation suffer. As I saw the thing went so far, that notwithstanding all my care and endeavours to please her, I had not been able to succeed, I

resolved to come to an explanation with her. I told her, "that there was a current report that I treated her ill, though I made it my study to give her every mark of my esteem. If the report was true, I desired her to allow me to remove from her; for that I would not choose to stay to give her pain, but only with a quite contrary view." She answered very coldly, "I might do what I would; for she had not spoken about it, but was resolved to live apart from me." This was fairly giving me my discharge, and I thought of taking my measures privately to retire. As I had not, since my widowhood, made any visits but such as were of pure necessity, or charity, there we found too many discontented spirits, who made a party with her against me; while I thought God required of me an inviolable secrecy of all my pains, both exterior and interior. There is nothing which makes nature die so much, as to find neither support nor consolation. In short I saw myself obliged to go out, in the middle of winter, with my children and my daughter's nurse. At that time there was no house empty in the town. The *Benedictines* offered me an apartment in theirs.

I was now in a great straight; on one side fearing lest I was shunning the cross, on the other side, thinking it unreasonable to impose my stay on one to whom it was only painful. Besides what I have related of her carriage, which still continued; when I went into the country to take a little repose, she complained that I left her alone. If I desired her to come thither she would not. If I said, "I durst not ask her to come, for fear of incommoding her, by changing her bed," she replied, "It was only an excuse, because I would not have her go; and that I only went to be away from her." When I heard that she was displeased at my being in the country, I returned to the town. Then she could not bear to speak to me, or to see me. I accosted her without making as if I saw how she carried it; but in-

stead of making me any answer, she turned her head another way. I often sent her my coach, desiring her to come and spend a day in the country. She sent it back empty, without any answer. If I passed some days there without sending it, she complained aloud. In short, all I did to please her soured her, God so permitting it; for she had in the main a good heart, but was troubled with an uneasy temper: and I do not fail to think myself under much obligation to her.

Being with her on *Christmas* day, I said to her with much affection. "My mother, on this day was the King of *Peace* born, to bring it to us, I beg *peace* of you in his name." I think that touched her, though she would not let it appear. The Ecclesiastic, whom I had with me at home, far from strengthening and comforting me, did nothing but weaken and afflict me, telling me that I ought not to suffer certain things. I had not credit enough to discharge any domestic, however defective or culpable. As soon as any of them were warned to go away, she sided with them, and all her friends interfered in it. As I was ready to go off, one of my mother-in-law's friends, a man of worth, who had always an esteem for me, without daring to shew it, having heard it, was much afraid lest I should leave the town; for the removal of my alms, he thought, would be a loss to the country. He resolved to speak to my mother-in-law, in the softest manner he could; for he knew her. After he had spoken to her, she said, "She would not put me away, but if I would go she would not hinder me." After this he came to see me, and desired me to go and make an excuse to her, in order to content her. I told him, I should be willing to make a hundred, though "I did not know about what; that I did it continually about every thing, which made her uneasy. But that was not now the matter, for I made no complaint of her, but thought it not proper for me to continue with her, to give her pain; that it was but just



that I should contribute to her ease." However he went with me into her room. Then I told her, "That I begged her pardon, if ever I had displeased her in any thing, that it had never been my intention to do it; that I desired her, before this gentleman, who was her friend, to tell me wherein I had given her any offence." Here God permitted, that she made a declaration of the truth in his presence.— "She said she was not a person to suffer herself to be offended; that she had no other complaint against me, but that I did not love her, and that I wished her dead."— I answered her, "That these thoughts were far from my heart, so far from it, that I should be glad, by my best care and attendance on her to prolong her days: that my affection was real, but that she never would be persuaded "to believe it, whatever testimonies I could give, so long as she hearkened to people who spoke to her against me; that she had with her a maid, who, far from shewing me any respect, treated me ill, so far as to push me when she wanted to pass by; she had done it at church; making me give way to her with as much violence as contempt; several times also in my chamber grating me with her words; that I had never complained of it; because such a temper might one day give her trouble." She took the girl's part: nevertheless we embraced one another, and it was left so. Soon after, when I was in the country, this maid having me no more to vent her chagrins on, behaved in such a manner to my mother-in-law as she could not bear. She immediately upon it, put her out of doors. I must say here on my mother-in-law's behalf, that she had both sense and virtue, and except certain faults, which persons who do not practise prayer, are liable to, she had good qualities. Perhaps I caused crosses to her without intending it, and she to me without knowing it. I hope what I write will not be seen by any who may be offended with it, or who may not be in a condition of seeing these matters in God.

That gentleman who had used me so ill, for breaking off my acquaintance with him, among his penitents had one, who for affairs which befel her husband, was obliged to quit the country. He himself was accused of the same things, of which he had so liberally and unjustly accused me, and even of things much worse, and with more noise and outcry. Though I well knew all this, God granted me the favour never to make his downfall the subject of my discourse; never to open my lips about it. On the contrary, when any spoke to me of it, I pitied him and said what I could in mitigation of his case. And God governed my heart so well, that it never offered to go into any vain joy at seeing him overtaken, and oppress, with those kind of evils which he had been so assiduous in endeavouring to bring upon me. And though I knew that my mother-in-law was informed of it all, I never spoke to her about it, or about the sad confusions he had caused in a certain family. I did not lay hold on the opportunity to mention any thing of the wrong he had done me. I only answered her in a few words without blaming him; as God required of me such a silence about my crosses, for more than sixteen years, that my lips seemed sealed in every thing that regarded them.

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#### CHAPTER XXVI.

*The benefits of the obscure path of privation. Geneva presented to her, as the place to which she must remove, to attend on, and to serve the divine commands.*

ONE day during my husband's life time, laden with sorrow, and not knowing what to do, I wished to speak to a person of distinction and merit, who came often into the country, and passed for one deeply interior. I wrote to request an opportunity with him, for that I wanted his in-

struction and advice : but soon after I felt remorse for it : and this voice sprung in my heart, " What,—dost thou seek for ease, and to shake off my yoke ?" Hereupon I instantly sent a note again to desire him to excuse me, adding, " That what I had wrote was only from *self-love* ; and not necessity ; that as he knew what it was to be faithful to God, I hoped he would not disapprove my acting with this christian simplicity." Yet he resented it, which surprised me much, as I had conceived a high idea of his virtue. Virtues he has, but such as are full of the life and activities of nature, and unacquainted with the paths of mortification and death. Thou, oh my God, hast been my conductor even in these paths, as with admiration I have discovered since they are past. Blessed be thy name for ever. I am obliged to bear this testimony of thy goodness.

Before I continue my narration, I must add one remark, which the Lord gave me to make upon the way by which he, in his goodness, was pleased to conduct me ; which is, that this obscure path is the surest to mortify the soul, as it leaves it not any prop to lean upon for support. Though it has no application to any particular state of Jesus Christ ; yet, at its coming out, it finds itself clothed with all his dispositions and divine states, having truly put on Christ. The impure and selfish soul, is hereby purified, as gold in the furnace. Full of its own judgment, and its own will before, but now obeys like a child, and finds no other will in itself. Before, it would have contested for a trifle : now it yields at first, not with reluctance and pain by way of practising virtue, but as it were naturally. Its own vices are vanished. This creature so vain before, now loves nothing but poverty, littleness and humiliation. It preferred itself above every body, now every body above itself, having a boundless charity for its neighbour, to bear with his faults and weaknesses, in order to win him by

love, which before it could not do but with very great constraint. The rage of the wolf is changed to the meekness of the lamb.

During all the time of my experiencing my miseries and my deep trials; I went after no fine sights or recreations. When others went, I stayed at home. I wanted to see and know nothing but Jesus Christ. My closet was my only diversion. Even when the queen was near me, whom I had never seen, and whom I had desire enough to see; I had only to open my eyes, and look out to see her; yet did not do it. I had been fond of hearing others sing: and yet I was once four days with one who passed for the finest voice in the world, without ever desiring her to sing: which surprised her, because she was not ignorant that knowing her name, I must know the charming excellence of her voice. However, I committed some infidelities, in enquiring what others said of me by way of blame. I met with one who told me every thing. And though I shewed nothing of it, it served only to mortify me, as I saw I was yet too much alive to self, and that *self-love* and nature had put me upon this enquiry.

I should never be able to express the number of my miseries; for they are so vastly surmounted by the favours of God, and so swallowed up in these, that I can see them no more. One of the things which gave me most pain in the seven years I have spoken of, especially the five last, was so strange a folly of my imagination, that it gave me no rest. My senses bore it company in such sort, that I could no more shut my eyes at church: and thus having all the gates and avenues open, I was like a vineyard exposed, because the hedges which the father of the family had set up were torn away. I saw then every one that came and went, and every thing that passed in the church. For the same force, which had drawn me inward to recollection, seemed to push me outward to dissipation.

Loaded with miseries of all sorts, weighed down with oppressions, and crushed under continual crosses, I thought of nothing else but ending my days thus. There remained in me not the least hope of ever emerging out of so distressing a state; but notwithstanding I thought I had lost grace for ever, and the salvation which it merits for us, I longed at least to do what I could for God, though I feared I should never love him; and seeing the happy state from whence I had fallen, I wished in gratitude to serve him, though I looked on myself as a victim doomed to destruction. Sometimes the view of that happy period caused secret desires to spring up in my heart, of recovering it again; but I was instantly rejected and thrown back into the depth of the abyss, from whence I could scarcely utter a sigh; I judged myself to be in a state which was due to unfaithful souls. I seemed, oh my God, as if I was for ever cast off from thy regard and from that of all creatures. By degrees my state ceased to be painful. I became even insensible to it, and my insensibility seemed like the final hardening of my reprobation. My coldness appeared to me a mortal coldness. And it was truly so, oh my God, since I thus died to self, in order to live wholly in thee, and in thy precious love.

To resume then my history, a servant of mine wanted to become a Bernabite. I wrote about it to Father de la Mothe; he answered me, that I must address Father la Combe, who was then the superior of the Bernabites of Tonon. This obliged me to write to him. I had always preserved a secret respect and esteem for him, as one under grace. I was glad of this opportunity of recommending myself to his prayers. I wrote to him about my fall from the grace of God, and that I had requited his favours with the blackest ingratitude; that I was miserable, and a subject worthy of compassion; and that, far from having advanced towards God, I was become entirely alienated from him. He an-

swered me in such a manner, as if he had known, by a supernatural light, notwithstanding the frightful description I had given of myself, that my condition was of grace. But I could not then believe it.

In the midst of my miseries \* Geneva came into my mind, in a singular manner, which caused me many fears. "What, said I, to complete my reprobation, shall I go to such an excess of impiety, as to quit the faith through apostasy? (the inhabitants of Geneva being generally Protestants or Calvinists.) Am I then about quitting that church, for which I would give a thousand lives? or shall I ever depart from that faith which I would even wish to seal with my blood?" I had such a distrust of myself, that I durst hope for nothing, but had a thousand reasons for fear, after the experience I had of my weakness. Nevertheless, the letter which I had received from Father la Combe, in which he wrote me an account of his present disposition, somewhat similar to mine, had such an effect, as to restore peace and calmness to my mind. I felt myself inwardly united to him, as to a person of great fidelity to the grace of God. Afterwards, a woman appeared to me in a dream to be come down from heaven, to tell me that God demanded me at Geneva.

About eight or ten days before Magdalen's day, 1680, it came into my mind to write to Father la Combe, and to request him, if he received my letter before that day, to pray particularly for me. And it was so ordered, contrary even to my expectations, that he received my letter on St. Magdalen's eve, and when praying for me the next day, it was impressed on his mind thrice over, with much power, "Ye

\* Geneva, a city of Savoy, and capital of the territory of Geneva; it is situated near the confines of France and Switzerland on the river Rhone, at the west end of the famous lake of Geneva, and is the great resort of the Calvinists from France, and other nations for education, it having been the place of Calvin's residence, and his disciples having had the dominion of that city ever since.

shall both dwell in one and the same place." I believe, oh my God, that this has been much more verified, both in our inward sense and experience, and in the same crucifying adventures which have befallen us, pretty much alike ; and in thyself, who art our dwelling, than in any temporal abode : for though I have been for some time in the same country with him, and thy providence has furnished us with some opportunities of being together, yet it appears to me, that it is much more verified in the former, as we both have had the like experience of Jesus Christ crucified.

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#### CHAPTER XXVII.

*The happy change, both in her inward condition, and in her persecutors, who now acknowledge their past errors, and testify their high esteem for her.*

On that happy Magdalen's day, my soul was perfectly delivered from all its pains. It had already begun, since the receipt of the first letter from Father la Combe, to recover a new life: it was then indeed only like that of a dead person raised, though not yet unbound from his grave-clothes: but on this day I was, as it were, in perfect life, and set wholly at liberty. I then found myself as much raised above nature, as before I had been depressed under its burden. I was inexpressibly overjoyed to find him, whom I thought I had lost for ever, returned to me again with unspeakable magnificence and purity. It was then, oh my God, that I found again in thee with new advantages, in an ineffable manner, all I had been deprived of: and the peace I now possessed was all holy, heavenly and inexpressible; all I had enjoyed before, was only a peace, the gift of God, but now I received and possessed the God of Peace: yet the remembrance of my past misery, still brought a fear upon me, lest nature should find means to

take to itself any part therein. As soon as it wanted to see or taste any thing, the spirit ever watchful crossed and repelled it. I was far from elevating myself then, or attributing to myself any thing of this new state : for my experience made me sensible what I was.

I hoped I should enjoy this happy state for some time, but little did I think my happiness so great and immutable as it was. If one may judge of a good by the trouble which precedes it, I leave mine to be judged of, by the sorrows I had undergone before my attaining to it. The apostle Paul tells us, that "the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that is prepared for us." How true is that even of this life? One day of this happiness was worth more than years of suffering. It was indeed at that time well worth all I had undergone, though it was then only dawning. An alacrity for doing good was restored to me, greater than ever. It seemed to be all quiet, free and natural to me. At the beginning, this liberty was less extensive; but as I advanced it grew still greater, I had occasion to see Monsieur Bertot for a few moments, and just told him, I thought my state much changed, having scarce time to tell him any more. He, seeming attentive to something else, answered, "No." I believed him; for grace taught me to prefer the judgment of others, and rather believe them than my own opinions or experience. This did not give me any kind of trouble; for every state seemed equally indifferent, if I had the favour of God. I felt a kind of beatitude, every day increasing in me. I did all sorts of good, without selfishness, or premeditation. Whenever a self-reflective thought was presented to my mind, it was instantly rejected, and as it were a curtain in the soul drawn before it. My imagination was kept so fixed, that I had now very little trouble on that head. I wondered at the clearness of my mind and purity of my whole heart.



I received a letter from Father la Combe, wherein he wrote, that God had discovered to him that he had great designs in regard to me, "Let them be, then said I to myself, either of justice or mercy, all is equal to me." I still had Geneva deeply at heart; but said nothing of it to any body, waiting for God to make known to me his all-powerful will, and fearing lest any stratagem of the devil should be concealed therein, that might tend to draw me out of my proper place, or steal me out of my condition. The more I saw my own misery, incapacity and nothingness, the plainer it appeared that they rendered me fitter for the designs of God, whatever they might be. "Oh my Lord, said I, take the weak and the wretched to do thy works, that thou mayest have all the glory of them, and that man may attribute nothing of them to himself. If thou shouldst take a person of eminence and great talents, one might attribute to him something thereof: but if thou takest me, it will be manifest that thou alone art the author of whatever good shall be done." I continued quiet in my spirit, leaving the whole affair to God, being satisfied, if he should require any thing of me, that he would furnish me with the means of performing it. I held myself in readiness with a full resolution to execute his orders, whenever he should make them known, though it were to the laying down of my life. I was released from all crosses, I resumed my care of the sick, and dressing of wounds, and God gave me to cure the most desperate. When surgeons could do no more, or were going to cut off limbs, it was then that God made me cure them.

Oh the joy that accompanied me every where, finding still, him who had united me to himself, in his own immensity and boundless power! Oh how truly did I experience what he said in the Gospel, by the four Evangelists, and by one of them twice over, "Whosoever will lose his

life for my sake shall find it; and whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

When I had lost all created supports, and even divine ones, I then found myself happily compelled to fall into the pure divine, and to fall into it, through all those very things which seemed to remove me further from it. In losing all the gifts, with all their supports, I found the Giver. In losing the sense and perception of thee in myself—I found thee, oh my God, to lose thee no more in thyself, in thy own immutability. Oh poor creatures, who pass along all your time in feeding on the gifts of God, and think therein to be the most favoured and happy, how I pity you if you stop here, short of the true rest, and cease to go forward to God himself, through the resignation of those very gifts which you now delight in.—How many pass all their lives this way, and think highly of themselves therein! There are others, who being called of God to die to themselves, yet pass all their time in a dying life, and in inward agonies, without ever entering into God, through death and a total loss of self, because they are always willing to retain something under plausible pretexts and so never lose themselves to the whole extent of the designs of God. Wherefore they never enjoy God in all his fulness; which is a loss that cannot perfectly be known till another life.

Oh my Lord, what happiness did I not largely taste in my solitude, and with my little family, where nothing interrupted my tranquility! As I was in the country, and the slender age of my children did not require my application too much, they being in good hands, I retired a great part of the day into a wood, where I passed as many days of happiness as I had had months of sorrow. Thou, oh my God, dealt by me as by thy servant Job, rendering me double for all thou hadst taken from me, and delivering me from all my crosses. Thou gavest me a marvellous facility to satisfy every one. What was surprising now, was that my

mother-in-law, who had ever been complaining of me, without my doing any thing more than usual to please her, declared now none could be better satisfied with me than she was. Such as before had cried me down the most, now testified their sorrow for it, and became full of my praises. My reputation was established with much more advantage, in proportion as it had appeared to be lost. I remained in an entire peace, as well without as within. It seemed to me that my soul was become like that new *Jerusalem*, spoken of in the Apocalypse, *prepared as a bride for her husband, and where there is no more sorrow, or sighing*. I had a perfect indifference to every thing that is here, and an union so great with the good will of God, that my own will seemed to be entirely lost. My soul could not incline itself on the one side or the other, since that another will had taken place of its own, but only nourished itself with the daily providences of God. It now found a will all divine, which yet was so natural and easy to it, that it found itself infinitely more free in this, than ever it had been in its own.

These dispositions have still subsisted, and still grown stronger, and more perfect even to this hour. I could neither desire one thing nor another, but was content with whatever fell out, without making any reflection thereupon, or giving any attention thereto, except when any in the house asked me, "Will you have this or that?" And then I was surprised to find that there was nothing left in me which could desire or choose. I was as if every thing, of smaller matters, quite disappeared, a higher power having taken up and filled all their room. I even perceived no more that soul which he had formerly conducted by his crook and his staff, because now he alone appeared to me, my soul having given up its place to him. It seemed to me, as if it was wholly and altogether passed into its God, to make but one and the same thing with him; even as a little drop of wa-

ter, cast into the sea, receives the qualities of the sea. Oh, union of unity, demanded of God by Jesus Christ for men, and merited by him. How strong is this in a soul that is become lost in its God! After the consummation of this divine unity, the soul remains *hid with Christ in God*. This happy loss is not like those transient ones, which ecstasy operates, which are rather an absorbment than union, for the soul afterwards finds itself again with all its own dispositions. But here she feels that prayer fulfilled—"That they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us."

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#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Remarkable occurrence at Paris. A Dominican, desiring to go on a mission to Siam, is turned from it to assist her. They speak to the Bishop of Geneva at Paris. Being confirmed in its being her duty, she resigns herself to go to Geneva.*

I WAS obliged to go to Paris about some business.—Having entered into a church, that was very dark, I went up to the first confessor I found, whom I did not know, nor have ever seen since. I made a simple and short confession; but to the confessor himself I said not a word.—He surprised me much in saying, "I know not who you are, whether maid, wife or widow; but I feel a strong inward motion, to exhort you to do what the Lord has made known to you, that he requires of you. I have nothing else to say." I answered him, "Father I am a widow who have little children. What else could God require of me, but to take due care of them in their education?" He replied, "I know nothing about this. You know if God manifests to you that he requires something of you; there is nothing in the world which ought to hinder you from doing his will. One must leave one's children to do

that." This surprised me much. However, I told him nothing of what I felt for Geneva. I disposed myself submissively to quit every thing, if God required it of me. I did not look upon it a good I aspired to, or a virtue I hoped to acquire, or as any thing extraordinary, or as an act that would merit some return on God's part; but only gave myself up to be led in the way of my duty, whatever it might be, feeling no distinction between my own will and the will of God in me.

In this disposition, I lived with my family in the greatest tranquility, until one of my friends had a great desire to go on a mission to Siam. He lived twenty leagues from my house. As he was ready to make a vow to this purpose, he found himself stopped, and felt an impulse to come to speak to me. He came immediately, and as he had some reluctance to declare his mind to me, he went to read prayers in my chapel, hoping God would be satisfied with his making the vow, but as he was performing divine service in my hearing, he was stopped again. Whereupon he left the chapel to come to speak to me. He then told me his intention.

Though I had no thought of saying any thing positive to him on that head, I felt an impression in my soul to relate to him my case, and the idea I had had for a long time past of going to Geneva. I told him a dream that I had, which appeared to me supernatural, and had reference hereto: and when I had done, I felt a strong impulse to say to him, "You must go to Siam. You must serve me in this affair. It is for that end God has sent you hither; I desire you to give me your advice." After three days, having considered the matter, and consulted God in it, he told me that he believed I was to go thither; but to be the better assured of it, it would be needful to see the Bishop of Geneva; that if he approved of my design, it would be a sign that it was from God; if not, I must drop it. I fell in with his sentiment.

He then offered to go to Annecy,\* to speak to the Bishop, and to bring me a faithful account of what they should agree on together. As he was advanced in years, we were deliberating what way he could take so long a journey, when there came two travellers, who told us the Bishop was at Paris. This I looked on as an extraordinary providence. He advised me to write to Father la Combe, and recommend the affair to his prayers, as he was in that country. He then spoke to the bishop at Paris; and I having occasion to go thither, spoke to him also.

I told him, "that my design was to go into the country, to employ there my substance, to erect an establishment for all such as should be willing truly to serve God, and to give themselves unto him without reserve; and that many of the servants of God had encouraged me thereto." The bishop approved of the design. He said, "there were new Catholicks going to establish themselves at Gex†, and that it was a providential thing." I answered him, that "I had no vocation for Gex, but for Geneva." He said, "I might go from hence to that city."

I thought this was a way which divine providence had opened, for my taking this journey with the less difficulty. And as I yet knew nothing positive of what God would require at my hand, I was not willing to oppose any thing. "Who knows said I, but the will of God is only that I should contribute to this establishment?"

I went to see the prioress of the new Catholicks at Paris. She seemed much rejoiced, and assured me she would gladly join me. As she is a great servant of God, this confirmed me: For when I could reflect a little, which was but seldom, I thought God would make choice of her for her virtue, and me for my worldly substance; for when

\* ANNECY, a city situate on a lake of the same name, twenty miles south of GENEVA. In this city was the residence of the Bishop of GENEVA,

† Gex, a town of France, seven miles north-west of Geneva.

I inadvertently looked at myself, I could not think God would make use of me : but when I saw the things in God, then I perceived the more I was nothing, the fitter I was for his designs. As I saw nothing in myself extraordinary, as I looked on myself in the lowest stage of perfection, and imagined that an extraordinary degree of inspiration was necessary for extraordinary designs, this made me hesitate, and fear deception. I did not yet sufficiently comprehend, that to follow, step by step, the guidance of divine providence was the greatest and purest light. It was not that I was in fear of any thing, as to my perfection and salvation which I had referred to God ; but I was afraid of not doing his will by being too ardent and hasty in doing it. I went to consult Father Claude Martin. At that time he gave me no decisive answer, demanding time for praying about it ; saying he would write to me what should appear to him to be the will of God concerning me.

I found it hard to get to speak to M. Bertot, both on account of his being difficult of access, and of my knowing how he condemned things extraordinary, or out of the common road, beside his never having given me the least help in regard to my inward leadings : yet being my director, I submitted, against my own views or judgment, to what he said, laying down all my own experiences when duty required me to believe and obey. I thought however, that in an affair of this importance, I ought to address myself to him, and prefer his sense of the matter to that of every one beside, persuaded he would infallibly tell me the will of God. I went to him then, and he told me that my design was of God, and that he had had a sense given him of God for some time past, that he required something of me. I therefore returned home to set every thing in order. I loved my children much, having great satisfaction in being with them, but resigned all to God to follow his will.

At my return from Paris, I left myself in the hands of God, resolved not to take any step, either to make the thing succeed or to hinder it, either to advance or retard it, but singly to move as he should be pleased to direct me. I had mysterious dreams, which portended nothing but crosses, persecutions and afflictions. My heart submitted to whatever it should please God to ordain. I had one which was very significant.

Being employed in some necessary work, I saw near me a little animal which appeared to be dead. This animal I took to be the envy of some persons, which seemed to have been dead for some time. I took it up, and as I saw it strove hard to bite me, and that it magnified to the view of the eye, I cast it away; but found thereupon that it filled my fingers with sharp-pointed prickles like needles. I came to one of my acquaintance to get him to take them out; but he pushed them deeper in, and left me so, till a charitable priest, of great merit, (whose countenance is still present with me, though I have not yet seen him, but believe I shall before I die) took this animal up with a pair of pincers. As soon as he held it fast, those sharp prickles fell off, of themselves. Then I found that I easily entered into a place which before had seemed inaccessible. And though the mire was up to my girdle, in my way to a deserted church, I went over it, without getting defiled. It will be easy to see in the sequel what this signified.

Doubtless you will wonder that I, who make so little account of things extraordinary, relate dreams. I do it for two reasons; first, out of fidelity, having promised to omit nothing of what should come into my mind: secondly, because it is the method God makes use of to communicate himself to faithful souls, to give them foretokens of things to come, which concern them. Thus mysterious dreams are found in many places of the holy scriptures. They have singular properties, as,



1st, To leave a certainty that they are mysterious, and will have their effect in their season ;

2d, To be hardly ever effaced out of the memory, though one forgets all others ;

3d. To redouble the certainty of their truth every time one thinks of them ; and

4th, They generally leave a certain unction, a divine sense or savour at our waking.

I received letters from sundry religious persons, some of whom lived far from me, and from one another, relating to my going forth in the service of God, and some of them to Geneva in particular, in such a manner as surprised me. One of them intimated that I must there bear the cross and be persecuted ; and another of them that I should be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and arms to the maimed.

The ecclesiastic or chaplain, of our house was much afraid lest I was under a delusion : but what at that time greatly confirmed me was that Father Claude Martin, whom I mentioned above, wrote to me, that after many prayers, God had given him to know that he required me at Geneva, and to make a free sacrifice of every thing to him. I answered him, " that perhaps God required of me nothing more than a sum of money to assist in a foundation which was going to be established there." He replied, that God had made him know that he wanted not my worldly substance but myself. At the very same time with this letter I received one from Father la Combe, who wrote to me that God had given him a certainty, as he had done to several of his good and faithful servants and hand-maids, that he wanted me at Geneva. The writers of these two letters lived above a hundred and fifty leagues from each other ; and yet both wrote the same thing. I could not but be somewhat surprised to receive at the same time two letters so exactly alike, from two persons living so far distant from each other.

As soon as I became fully convinced of its being the will of God, and saw nothing on earth capable of detaining me, my senses had some pain about leaving my children. And upon reflecting thereon, a doubt seized my mind. Oh my God! had I rested on myself, or on the creatures, I should have revolted; and, as we read in the scriptures, "leaned on a broken reed, which would have pierced my hand.— But relying on thee alone, what needed I to fear? I resolved then to go as a fool, regardless of the censures of such as understand not what it is to be a servant of God, and to receive and obey his orders. I firmly believed that he, by his providence, would furnish the means necessary for the education of my children, and that in pure faith. I put every thing by degrees in order, God alone being my guide.

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#### CHAPTER XXIX.

*Her mother-in-law's great affection for her, also the waiting-maid's, who after her departure dies of grief. Her great charity shewn in sundry instances, while she is waiting for the right time of setting off on her intended journey.*

WHILST Providence, on the one hand, appointed my forsaking all things, it seemed on the other to make my chains the stronger, and my separation the more blameable; for none could receive stronger marks of affection from an own mother than those which I received at this time from my mother-in-law; even the least sickness which befell me made her very uneasy: she said, "She had veneration for my virtue." I believe what contributed not a little to this change was, that she had heard from one or other, that three persons had offered suit to me, and that I refused them, though their fortune and quality was quite superior to mine. She remembered how she had upbraided me on this head, and I answered her not a word, whereby she might under-

stand that it depended only on myself to marry to advantage. She began to fear lest such rigorous treatment, as hers had been toward me, might excite me to deliver myself, by such means, with honour from her tyranny, and was sensible what damage that might be to my children. So she was now very tender to me on every occasion.

I fell extremely ill. I thought that God had accepted of my willingness to sacrifice all to him, and required that of my life. During this illness, my mother-in-law went not from my bed-side; her many tears proved the sincerity of her affection. I was very much affected at it, and thought I loved her as my true mother. How then should I leave her now, being so far advanced in age? The maid, who till then had been my plague, took an inconceivable friendship for me. She praised me every where, extolling my virtue to the highest; and served me with extraordinary respect. She begged pardon for all that she had made me suffer, and died of grief after my departure.

There was a priest of merit, an inward man, who had fallen in with a temptation of taking on him an employ which I was sensible God did not call him to; and therefore, fearing it might be a snare to him, I advised him against it. He promised me he would not, and yet accepted of it; he then avoided me, joined secretly in calumniating me, gradually fell away from grace, and died soon after.

There was a Nun in a monastery I often went to, who was entered into a state of purification which every one in the house looked on as distraction; and therefore they locked her up, which had like to have destroyed her. All that went to see her, called it phrenzy or melancholy. I knew her to be devout. I requested to see her. As soon as I approached, I felt an impression of her state, being that of purification. I desired of the superior, that she should not be locked up, nor people admitted to see her, but that she

would confide her to my care; for I hoped things would change. I discovered that her greatest pain was, at being counted a fool. I advised her to bear the state of foolishness, Jesus Christ had been willing to bear it before Herod. This sacrifice gave her a calmness at once. But as God was willing to purify her soul, he separated her from all those things, to which she had had before the greatest attachment. At last, after she had patiently undergone her sufferings, her superior wrote to me "that I was in the right, and that she was now come out of that state of dejection, in greater purity than ever." God gave to me alone at that time to know her state. This was the commencement of the gift of discerning spirits, which I afterwards received more fully.

The winter before I left home, was one of the longest and hardest that had been for several years, viz. that of 1680. It was followed with extreme scarcity, which proved to me an occasion of exercising charity. My mother-in-law joined me heartily herein, and appeared to me so much changed, that I could not but be both surprised and overjoyed at it. We distributed at the house ninety-six dozen loaves every week, but the private charities to the bashful poor were much greater. I kept poor boys and girls employed at work: and God gave such blessings to my alms, that I did not find that my family lost any thing by it. Before the death of my husband, my mother-in-law told him, that I should ruin him with my charities, though he himself was so charitable, that in a very dear year, while he was young, he distributed a considerable sum; but now she repeated this to him so often, that he commanded me to set down in writing all the money I laid out, both what I gave for the expence of the house, and all that I caused to be bought, that from thence he might better judge of what I gave to the poor. This new obligation, which I was brought under, appeared to me so much the harder, as for

above eleven years that we had been married, I never before had the like required of me. What troubled me most, was the fear of having nothing to give such as wanted. However I submitted to it, yet without retrenching any part of my charities. I did not indeed set down any of my alms, and yet my account of expences was found to answer exactly. I was much surprised and astonished at it, and esteemed it one of the wonders of providences, for I saw plainly it was but given out of thy treasury, oh my God, that made me more liberal of what I thought was the Lord's, and not mine. Oh if we but knew how far charity, instead of wasting or lessening the substance of the donor, blessed, increased and multiplied it profusely; how much is there in the world of useless dissipation, which if properly applied, might amply serve for the subsistence of the poor, and would abundantly be restored, and amply rewarded to the families of those who gave it.

In the time of my greatest pains, some years after my husband's death, (for they begun three years before my widowhood, and lasted four years after,) my footman came one day to tell me, for I was then in the country, that there was in the road a poor soldier dying. I made him be brought in, and having ordered a separate place to be made ready for him, I kept him above a fortnight. His malady was a flux, which he had taken in the army. I performed for him with my own hands the most humble offices. I never did any thing of the kind which was so hard to me. The poor man, after I had made him receive the sacrament, fell a victim to the disorder.

What gave me now no small concern was the tenderness I had for my children, especially my youngest son, whom I had strong reasons for loving. I saw him inclined to good, and every thing seemed to favour the hopes I had conceived of him. I thought it running a great risk to leave him to another's education. My daughter I designed to

take with me, though she was at this time ill of a very tedious fever. Providence was pleased, however, so to order it that she was timely recovered. The ties, with which God held me closely united to himself, were infinitely stronger than those of flesh and blood. The laws of my sacred marriage obliged me to give up all, to follow my spouse whithersoever it was his pleasure to call me after him. Though I often hesitated, and doubted much before I went, I never doubted after my going off, of its being his will ; and though men, who judge of things only according to the success they seem to have, have taken occasion from my disgraces and sufferings, to judge of my calling, and to run it down as error, illusion and imagination ; it is that very persecution, and the multitude of strange crosses it has drawn upon me, (of which this imprisonment\* I now suffer, is one,) which have confirmed me in the certainty of its truth and validity ; nay, I am more than ever convinced that the resignation which I have made of every thing is in pure obedience to the divine will. The gospel effectually in this point shews itself to be true, which has promised to those that shall leave all for the love of God, *an hundred fold in this life, and persecutions also*. And have not I infinitely more than an hundred fold, in so entire a possession as thou, my God, hast taken of me ; in that unshaken firmness which thou givest me in my sufferings, in a perfect tranquillity in the midst of a furious tempest, which assalts me on every side ; in an unspeakable joy, enlargedness and liberty which I enjoy in a most straight and rigorous captivity. I have no desire that my imprisonment should end before the right time. I love my chains. Every thing is equal to me, as I have no will of my own, but purely the love and will of him who possesses me. My senses indeed have not any relish for such things, but my

\*She wrote this when confined in St. Marie, in Paris.

heart is separated from them, and borne over them : and my perseverance is not of myself, but of him who is my life ; so that I can say with the Apostle, " It is no more I that live, but Jesus Christ that liveth in me. It is he in whom I live, move, and have my being,"

To return to the subject, from which I often wander without reflection. I say then that I was not so uneasy to go with the new Catholicks, as to engage with them, not finding a sufficient attraction to the latter, though I sought for it, I longed indeed to contribute to the conversion of wandering souls, and God made use of me to convert several families before my departure, one of which was composed of eleven or twelve persons. Besides, Father La Combe had written to me, to make use of this opportunity for setting off, but did not tell me whether I ought to engage with them or not. Thus it was the providence of my God alone, which ordered every thing, to which I was resigned without any reserve : and that hindered me from engaging with them.

One day, through infidelity, reflecting humanly on this undertaking of mine, I found my faith staggering, weakened with a fear lest I were under a mistake, which slavish fear was increased by an ecclesiastic at our house, who told me it was a rash and ill advised design. Being a little discouraged, I opened the bible, and at first met with this passage in Isaiah, *fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help thee saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel.* Chap. lxi. 14. and near it, *Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, &c.*

I had a very great courage given me for going, but could not persuade myself that it would be to settle with the new catholicks. It was however necessary to see sister Garnier, their superior, who was at Paris, in order to take our mea-

tures together : but I could not go to Paris, because that journey would have hindered me from taking another at the time when I should have been obliged to go off. She then, though much indisposed, resolved to come and see me. In what a wonderful manner, oh my God, didst thou conduct things by thy providence, to make every thing come to the point of thy will ! every day I saw new miracles, which both amazed and still more confirmed me ; for with a paternal goodness thou didst take care even of the smallest things.— As she intended setting off, she fell sick : and which thou didst permit, in order to give room for a person, who would have discovered every thing, in the mean time to take a journey. As she had given me notice of the day she intended to set off, seeing that day was excessively hot, and so sultry that I imagined, as she had been taken such tender care of at home, they would not suffer her to begin her journey then, (which, really proved to be the case, as she afterwards told me) there arose suddenly a refreshing wind which did not cease during her whole journey.

I went to meet her, and brought her to my country-house, in such a manner that she was not seen or known of any body. What embarrassed me a little was, that I had two of my domestics who knew her : but as I was then endeavouring for the conversion of a lady, they easily believed that it was on this account I had sent for her, and that it was necessary to keep it secret, that the lady might not be discouraged from coming. Though I knew nothing of controversial points, yet God so furnished me that I did not fail to answer all her objections, and resolve all her doubts (to such a degree) that she could not but give herself up entirely to God. Though sister Garnier had a good share both of grace and natural understanding, yet her words had not such an effect on this soul as those with which God furnished me, as she assured me herself. She even could not forbear speaking of it. I felt a movement to beg



her of God, as a testimony of his holy will concerning me ; and he was pleased to grant it, (though she did not make her abjuration till after my departure) willing that I should go off without any other assurance, than that his divine Providence was conducting all things. The sister did not declare her thoughts to me for four days. Then she told me she would not go with me. At this I was the more surprised, as I had persuaded myself that God would grant to her virtue what he might refuse to my demerits. Beside, the reasons she gave appeared to me to be merely human, and void of supernatural grace. This made me hesitate a little : then, taking new courage, through the resignation of my whole self, I said, “ As I go not thither for your sake : I will not fail to go even without you.” This surprised her, as she owned to me ; for she thought that, on her refusal, I would decline my purpose of going.

I regulated every thing, wrote down the contract of association with them as I thought proper. No sooner had I done it, but I felt great perturbation and trouble of mind for it. I told her my pain, and that I had no doubt but God demanded me at Geneva, yet did not let me see that he would have me to be of their congregation. She desired to have some time till after prayers and communion, and that then she would tell me what she thought God required of me. Accordingly he directed her contrary both to her interests and inclination. She then told me, “ I ought not to connect myself with her, that it was not God’s design ; that I only ought to go with her sisters, and that when I should be there, Father la Combe, (*whose letter she had seen*) would signify to me the divine will.” I entered at once into these sentiments, and my soul then regained the sweets of inward peace.

My first thought had been (before I heard of the new catholicks going to Gex) to go directly to Geneva, as at this time there were catholicks there in service, and other-



seemed as if he bequeathed me a portion of his spirit to help his children.

I was seized with a fear, that the check I had felt, at stripping myself (in favour of the new Catholicicks, of what I had designed for Geneva) was a stratagem of nature, which does not love to be stripped. I wrote to sister Garnier to get a contract drawn up according to my first memorial. God permitted me to commit this fault, to make me the more sensible of his protection over me.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

# THE LIFE OF LADY GUION.

## PART SECOND.

FROM HER LEAVING FRANCE, UNTIL HER RETURN TO  
IT, BEING ABOUT FIVE YEARS.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Her departure. Her interview at Corbeil with the first instrument of her conversion. She joins the Flying-Coach at Melun; goes by the cities of Lyons, Chamberry, Annecy and Geneva, to Gex.*

I WENT off, in a strange renunciation, and in great simplicity, scarcely able to render the reason of what made me in such a manner quit my family, which I most tenderly loved, being without any positive assurance, *yet hoping even against hope itself*. I went to the new Catholics at Paris, where providence wrought wonders to conceal me. They sent for the notary, who had drawn up the contract of engagement. When he read it to me, I felt such a repugnance to it, that I could not bear to hear it to the end, much less sign it. The notary wondered at it; and much more so, when sister Garnier came in, and told him herself, *that there needed no contract of engagement*.—I was enabled through divine assistance, to put my affairs in very great order, and also to write sundry letters.

I had two domestics, whom it was very difficult for me to discharge, as I did not think to take them with me. Yet if I had left them, they would have told of my departure, and I should have been sent after; as I was when it was known. But God so ordered it that they were willing to follow me: they were of no use to me, and soon after, returned into France. I took with me only my little daughter, and two maids to serve us both. We set off in a boat

upon the river, though I had taken places in the stage-coach, in order that, if they searched for me in it, they might not find me. I went to Melun\* to wait for it there.

It was surprising that, in this boat the child without adverting to what she did, could not forbear making crosses, employing a person to cut her bulrushes for that purpose. She then put round me, all over, above three hundred of them. I let her do it, and inwardly apprehended that it was not without its mystery. I felt an interior certainty that I was going to meet with crosses in abundance; and that this child was sowing the cross for me to reap it. Sister Garnier, who saw that they could not restrain her from covering me with crosses, said to me, "What that child does appears to be mysterious;" and turning to the little girl, she said, "give me some crosses too, my pretty girl;" "No," she replied, they are all for my dear mother;" but gave her one to stop her importunity, then continued putting more on me: after which she desired some river-flowers, which floated on the water, to be given her; and braiding a garland, she put it on my head, and said to me, "after the cross you shall be crowned." I admired all this in silence, and offered myself up to the pure love of God, as a victim, free and willing to be sacrificed to him.†

Some time before my departure, a particular friend of mine, who is a true servant of God, related to me a vision she had respecting me. "She saw my heart surrounded with thorns; that our Lord appeared in it well pleased; that though the thorns seemed likely to tear it, yet, instead of doing that, they only rendered it fairer, and our Lord's approbation the stronger."

\* Melun, is a town on the river Seine, about twenty-five miles south-east from Paris.

† This little daughter lived to be married to the Count de Vaux, as we shall see in the third part, chap. xi.

In my way, at Corbeil,\* I met with the priest whom God had first made use of, so powerfully to draw me to his love. He approved of my design to leave all for the Lord : but he thought I should not be well suited with the new Catholics. He told me some particular things about them, to shew that our leadings were incompatible. He gave me a caution not to let them know that I walked in the inward path ; that, if I did, I must expect nothing but persecutions from them. But it is in vain to contrive to hide, when God sees it best for us to suffer, and when our wills are utterly resigned to him, and totally passed into his. Oh King of divine lovers ! how didst thou strike on thyself, in all the justice of God : and this soul devoted to imitate, and be conformable to thee, being clothed in thy righteous indignation against its own transgressions, strikes on itself in thy justice. Oh admirable thing, only known by experience.

At Paris I gave the new Catholics all the money I had. I reserved not to myself a single penny, rejoicing to be poor after the example of Jesus Christ. I brought from home nine thousand livres : as by my donation I had reserved none to myself, and by a contract lent them six thousand ; this six thousand has returned to my children but none of it to me, which gives me no trouble ; for poverty thus procured, makes my riches. The rest I gave entirely to the sisters who were with us, as well to supply their travelling expenses, as for their beginning to buy furniture. I did not reserve so much as my linen for my own use, putting it in the common repository. I had neither a locked coffer nor purse. I had brought but little linen for fear of mistrust ; and lest, in wanting to carry off clothes, I should have been discovered. My persecutors have not failed to report that I had brought great sums from home, which I had imprudently expended and given to the relations of Father la Combe,

\* Corbeil, a little town on the river Seine, sixteen miles south from Paris.

which is as false, as it is true I had not a penny ; and that, on my arrival at Annecy, a poor man asking alms, I, having nothing else, gave him the buttons from my sleeves. At another time I gave a poor man a little ring, quite plain, in the name of Jesus Christ, which I had worn as a token of my spiritual marriage with him.

We joined the flying-stage at Melun, where I left sister Garnier, and went on with the other sisters, with whom I had no acquaintance. These carriages were very fatiguing, and I got no sleep through so long a journey, and though my daughter, a very tender child, only five years of age, got scarce any, yet we bore so great a fatigue without falling sick by the way ; and this child had not an hour's uneasiness, though she was only three hours in bed every night ; at another time half this fatigue, or even the want of rest, would have thrown me into a fit of sickness. God only knows both the sacrifices which he induced me to make, and the joy of my heart in offering up every thing to him. Had I kingdoms and empires, me thinks I should yield them up with still more joy, to give him the higher marks of my love. But is it a quitting any thing, to quit it for him ?

As soon as we arrived at the inn, I went to church and stayed there till dinner time. In the coach, my divine Lord communed with me, and in me, in a manner which the others could not comprehend, and indeed did not perceive ; the cheerfulness I shewed, in the greatest dangers, encouraged them. I even sang hymns of joy at finding myself disengaged from the riches, honours and entanglements of the world. God in such a manner protected us, that he seemed to be to us *a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of a cloud by day*. We passed over a very dangerous place between Lyons\* and Chamberry. Our carriage broke at coming

\* Lyons, capital of Lyonois, at the confluence of the rivers Rhone and Saone, 225 miles S. E. from Paris, and 45 miles W. from Chamberry the capital city of Savoy, which last is 45 miles S. from Geneva.

out of it. Had it happened a little sooner, we must have perished.

We arrived at Annecy on Magdalen's eve, 1681 : and on Magdalen's day the bishop of Geneva performed divine service for us, at the tomb of St. Francis de Sales. There I renewed my spiritual marriage with my Redeemer ; as I did every year on this day. There also I felt a sweet remembrance of that saint, with whom our Lord gives me a singular union. I say union, for it appears to me that the soul in God is united with the saints, and the more so, as they are the more conformable to him : and it is an union of unity which it pleases God sometimes to revive, and awaken in the soul for his own glory ; at such times those saints are rendered more intimately present to that soul in God : and this revival is as it were an holy intercourse of friend with friend, in him who unites them all in one immortal tie. Generally all continues hid with Jesus Christ in God.

That day we left Annecy ; and on the next, went to prayers at Geneva, at the house of the French resident. I had much joy at the communion ; and it seemed to me as if God more powerfully united me to himself. And there I prayed to him for the conversion of that great people. That evening we arrived late at Gex, where we found only bare walls ; though the Bishop of Geneva had assured us that the house was furnished, as undoubtedly he believed it to be. We lodged at the house of the sisters of the charity, who were so kind as to give us their beds.

I was in great pain of mind for my daughter, who visibly fell away. I had a strong desire to place her with the *Ursulines* at Tonon. My heart was so affected on her behalf, that I could not forbear weeping in secret for her in bed. Next day I said, "I would take my daughter to Tonon, and leave her there, till I should see how we might be accommodated here." They opposed it strong-



ly, after a manner which seemed very hard-hearted as well as ungrateful, seeing she was just worn away to a skeleton. I looked upon the poor child as a victim, whom I had imprudently sacrificed. I wrote to Father la Combe, intreating him to come to see me, to consult together thereupon; thinking I could not in conscience keep her in this place any longer. Several days passed without my having any answer. In the mean time I became resigned to the will of God, whether to have succour or not.

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## CHAPTER II.

*She resides with the new Catholics at Gex, where her little daughter is reduced to extremity. Father la Combe, coming to her, advises her to remove the child to Tonon, where she meets with a famous Hermit. Her child fares hardly at first, but soon recovers.*

OUR Lord who took pity on the lamentable condition of my daughter, so ordered it, that the Bishop of Geneva wrote to Father la Combe, to come as speedily as possible to see us, and to console us. As soon as I saw that father, I was surprised to feel an interior grace, which I may call *communication*; and such as I had never had before with any person. It seemed to me that an influence of grace came from him to me, through the innermost of the soul; and returned from me to him, in such a manner that he felt the same effect. Like a tide of grace it caused a flux and reflux, flowing on into the divine and invisible ocean. This is a pure and holy union, which God alone operates, and which has still subsisted, and even increased between us. It is an union exempt from all weakness, and from all self-interest, which causes those, who are blessed with it, to rejoice in beholding themselves, as well as those beloved, laden with crosses and afflictions; an union which has no need of the presence of the body; which at certain

times absence makes not more absent, nor presence more present; an union unknown to all men but such as are come to experience it : nor can it ever be experienced but betwixt such souls as are united to God. As I never before felt such an union of this kind with any one, it then appeared to me quite new, having never heard of the like. I had no doubt of its being from God ; so far from turning the mind from him, it tended to draw it more deeply into him. It dissipated all my pains, and established me in the most profound peace.

God gave him at first much openness towards me. He related to me the mercies God had shown him, and several extraordinary things, which gave me at first some fear. I suspected some illusion, especially in such things as flatter in regard to the future ; little imagining then, that God would make use of me to draw him from this state, and bring him into that of naked faith. But I soon recovered from this fear, as I saw he was possessed of an extraordinary humility ; and that far from being elevated with the gifts which God had liberally conferred on him, or with his own profound learning, no persons could have a lower opinion of himself than he had. He told me, "As to my daughter, it would be best for me to take her to Tonon, where he thought she would be very well situated." And as to myself, after I had mentioned to him my dislike to the manner of life of the new Catholics, he told me, "that he did not think that it would be my proper place to be long with them ; but that it would be best for me to stay there, free from all engagements, till God, by the guidance of his providence, should make known to me how he would dispose of me, and draw my mind to the place whither he would have me to remove." I had already begun to awake regularly at midnight, in order to pray. At this time I awoke with these words suddenly put in my mind, "It is written of me, I will do thy will, oh my God." This was accom-

panied with the most pure, penetrating, and powerful communication of grace that I had ever experienced. And here I may remark, that though the state of my soul was already permanent in newness of life ; yet this new life was not in that immutability in which it has since been. To speak properly, it was a beginning life and a rising day, which goes on increasing unto the full meridian ; a day never followed by night ; a life which fears death no more, not even in death itself ; because he who has suffered the first death, shall no more be hurt of the second. From midnight I continued on my knees till four o'clock in the morning, in prayer, in a sweet intercourse with God, and did the same also the night following.

Next day after prayers, Father la Combe told me, that he had had a very great certainty that I was a stone which God designed for the foundation of some great building. But what that building was he knew no more than I. After whatever manner then it is to be, whether his divine Majesty will make use of me in this life, for some design known to himself only, or will make me one of the stones of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, it seems to me that such stone cannot be polished, but by the strokes of the hammer ; and that our Lord has given to this soul of mine the qualities of the stone, viz. firmness, a resignation like insensibility, to endure hardness and the operations of his hand.

I carried my little daughter to the Ursulines at Tonon. That poor child took a vast fondness for Father la Combe, saying, "He is a good father, one from God." Here I found a hermit, whom they called Anselm. He was a person of the most extraordinary sanctity, that had appeared for some time. He was from Geneva ; and God had miraculously drawn him from thence, at twelve years of age. He had (with the permission of the cardinal, at that time Archbishop of Aix in Provence) at nineteen years of age taken the habit of hermit of St. Augustine. He and another lived

alone in a little hermitage, where they saw nobody but such as came to visit their chapel. He had lived twelve years in this hermitage, never eating any thing but pulse with salt, and sometimes oil. Three times a week he lived on bread and water. He never drank wine, and generally made but one meal in twenty-four hours. He wore for a shirt a coarse hair cloth, and lodged on the bare ground. He lived in a continual state of prayer, and in the greatest humility. God had done by him many signal miracles.

This good hermit had a great sense of the designs of God on Father la Combe and me. But God shewed him at the same time that strange crosses were preparing for us both, and that we were both destined for the aid of souls. I did not find, as I expected, any fit place for my daughter at Tonon. In regard to her, I thought myself like Abraham when going to sacrifice hisson.—Father la Combe, accosting me here said, “welcome daughter of Abraham!” I found little encouragement to leave her there, and could still worse keep her with myself, because we had no room, and the little girls, whom they took to make Catholicks, were all mixed with us, and had contracted such habits as were pernicious. To leave her there I thought not right. The language of the country, where scarce any one understood French, and the food, which she could not take being so far different from ours, were great hardships. All my tenderness for her was awakened, and I looked on myself as her destroyer. I experienced what Hagar suffered when she put away her son Ishmael in the desert, that she might not be forced to see him perish. I thought if I had ventured to expose myself, I ought at least to have spared my daughter; as the loss of her education, and even her life, appeared to me inevitable. Every thing looked black in regard to her.

I thought that, with her natural disposition and fine qualities, she might have shined and attracted admiration, if edu-

cated in France, and been likely to have such offers for marriage, as she could never hope to meet with in this poor country, in which, if she should recover, she would never be likely to be fit for any thing. Here she could eat nothing of what was got for her. All her subsistence was only some spoonfuls of unpleasant and disagreeable broth, which I forced her to take against her will. I seemed like a second Abraham, holding the knife over her to destroy her. Our Lord would have me make a sacrifice to him, without any consolation, and plunged in sorrow, night was the time which gave vent to it. He made me see, on one side, the grief of her grandmother, if she should hear of her death, which she would impute to my taking the child away from her ; and the great reproach it would be accounted among all the family. The gifts of nature she was endowed with, were now like pointed darts which pierced me. I believe that God so ordered it, to purify me from too human an attachment, which was still so ready to stick close to me. For after I returned from the Ursulines at Tonon, they changed her manner of diet, and gave her what was suitable to her delicacy ; whereby, in a short time she recovered.

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### CHAPTER III.

*Outcry in France against M. Guion, changed into applauses. A visit from the Bishop of Geneva. Wonderful assistance and benefit received through Father la Combe, now her director.*

As soon as it was known in France, that I was gone, there was a general outcry. Those who attacked me with the most violence upon it, were the human spiritualists ; Father de la Mothe, wrote to me, that all persons of learning, of piety, the gown and the sword, united in censuring me. To alarm me still more, he informed me that my mother-in-law, with whom I had trusted my youngest son

and my children's substance, was fallen into a state of childhood. This however was very false.

I answered all these thundering letters as the spirit dictated. My answers were thought very just, and were well relished, whereby those violent exclamations were soon changed into applauses. Father La Mothe appeared to change his censures into esteem: but it did not hold long. Self-interest threw him back again; being disappointed in his hopes of a pension, which he expected I would have settled on him. Also sister Garnier, whatever was her reason, changed and declared against me.

Here I both eat and slept little. The food which was given us was rotten and full of worms, by reason of the great heat of the weather, and being kept too long; inso-much that what I should have formerly beheld with abhorrence now became my only nourishment; and yet every thing was rendered easy to me. In God I found, with increase, every thing which I had lost for him. That spirit, which I once thought I had lost in a strange stupidity, was restored to me with inconceivable advantages. I was astonished at myself. I found there was nothing which it was not fit for, or in which it did not succeed. Those who observed it said, "I had a prodigious capacity." Though I well knew that I had but a poor one; but that in God my spirit had received a quality which it had never had before. I thought I experienced something of the state which the Apostles were in, after they had received the Holy Ghost. I knew, I comprehended, I understood, I was enabled to do every thing requisite, I had every sort of good thing, and no want of any thing. I remembered that fine passage of wisdom, *All good things came to me with her*. Wisdom of Sol. vii. 2. When Jesus Christ the eternal wisdom is formed in the soul, after the death of the first Adam, it finds in him all good things communicated to it.

Some time after my arrival at Gex, the Bishop of Geneva

came to see us. He was so clearly convinced, and so much affected, that he could not forbear expressing it. He opened his heart to me on what God required from him. He confessed to me his own deviations and infidelity. Every time, when I spoke to him, he entered into what I said, and acknowledged it to be the truth; as indeed it was the spirit of truth which inspired me to speak to him, without which I should be only a mere simpleton. And yet as soon as persons who sought for pre-eminence, and could not suffer any good but what came from themselves, spoke to him, he was so weak as to let himself be imposed on with impressions against the truth. This foible, with others, has hindered him from doing all the good, which otherwise he might have done in his diocese.

After I had spoken to him, he said, "he had it in his mind to give me Father la Combe for director; for that he was a man illuminated of God, who well understood the inward path, and had a singular gift of pacifying souls." These were his own words. Greatly was I rejoiced, when the Bishop appointed him, seeing thereby his authority united with the grace which already seemed to have given him to me, by an union and effusion of supernatural life and love. The fatigues I had, and watchings with my daughter, threw me into a violent disorder, attended with exquisite pains. The physicians judged me in danger, and yet the sisters of the house quite neglected me: especially her who had the care of the œconomy, she was so penurious, that she did not give me what was necessary to sustain life. I had not a penny to help myself with, as I had reserved nothing to myself. And beside, they at that time received all the money which was remitted me from France, which was very considerable. Thus I practised poverty, and was in necessity even among those to whom I had given all.—They wrote to Father la Combe, desiring him to come to me, as I was so extremely ill. On hearing of my condition,

he was so touched with compassion, as to walk on foot all night, it being eight leagues ; in that, as in every thing else, endeavouring to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ.\*

As soon as he entered the house, my pains abated : and when he had prayed and blessed me, laying his hand on my head, I was perfectly cured, to the great astonishment of my physicians ; who were not willing to acknowledge the miracle ; being not well pleased, as they knew that we were come on a religious motive, and their sentiments and profession were so opposite to ours. These sisters themselves advised me to go to my daughter, to take milk for a fortnight. Father la Combe returned with me. A violent storm arose on the lake, which made me very sick, and seemed likely to upset the boat. But the hand of Providence remarkably appeared in our favour ; so much that it was taken notice of by the mariners and passengers, who looked upon Father la Combe as a saint. Thus we arrived at Tonon, where I found myself so perfectly recovered, that, instead of making and using the remedies I had proposed, I went into a retreat, and stayed there twelve days. Here I made vows of perpetual chastity, poverty, and obedience, to wit, readily to obey whatever I should believe to be the will of God, also to obey the church, and to honour Jesus Christ in such a manner as he pleased.

At this time I found that I had the perfect chastity of love to God, mine being without any reserve, division, or view of interest ;—perfect poverty, by the total privation of every thing that was mine, both inwardly and outwardly ;—perfect obedience to the will of God, submission to the church, and honour to Jesus Christ in loving himself only ; the effect of which soon appeared. When by the loss of *our-*

\* Singularly devoted to God, and faithful to the sight of duty, which, in the land of darkness, was given him, Father la Combe appears to have been a laborious good man in his station, not shunning the cross, or shrinking from persecutions ; and at last, for his fidelity thrown into prison, where, as far as appears, he ended his days.



*selves* we are passed into God, and returned into our origin, our will is made one and the same with that of God, according to the prayer of Christ, "As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, grant that they also may be one in us." Oh, but it is then that the will is rendered marvellous, both because it is made the will of God, which is the greatest of miracles: and because it works wonders in him: for as it is God who wills in the soul, that will has its effect. Scarce has it willed but the thing is done.

Why then, may some say, are so many oppressions endured? Why do not these souls, if they have such a power, set themselves free from them? If they had any will to do any thing of that sort, and it were not granted; that would be the will of the flesh, or the will of man, and not the will of God.

I rose constantly at midnight, ever waking timely enough to do it: if I wound up my alarm-watch, then I used not to wake in time. I saw that God had the care of a father and a spouse over me. When I had any indisposition, and my body wanted rest, I did not awake, but at such times I felt even in my sleep a singular possession of God. Some years have passed wherein I have had only a kind of half-sleep; but my soul waked the more for God, as sleep seemed to steal from it every other attention. The Lord made it known also to many persons, that he designed me for a mother of a great people, but a people simple and child-like. They took these intelligences in a literal sense, and thought it related to some institution or congregation; but to me it appeared nothing else, than the persons whom it pleased God that I should afterwards win over to him, to whom I should serve as a mother, through his goodness: giving them the same union of affection for me as that of children for a parent, but an union much deeper and stronger: and giving me all that was necessary for them, to bring them to walk in the way by which he would lead them, as I shall shew in the sequel.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The excellence and purity of the state into which Christ had brought her. Her return through Geneva, and her dangerous fall from a horse. Money sent to her out of France for the community she was in.*

I WOULD willingly suppress what I am now about to write, if any thing of it were my own, as well on account of the difficulty of expressing myself thereon, as because few souls are capable of leadings so little known, and so little comprehended, that I have never read of any thing like it. I shall say something of the interior dispositions I was then in, if it serves you, who are willing to be of the number of my children, and if it serves such as are already my children, to induce them to let God glorify himself in them after his manner, and not after their own, I shall think my pains well employed. If there be any thing which they do not comprehend, let them die to themselves, and they will find it much better by experience than from any thing I could say; for expression never equals experience.

After I had come out of the trying condition I have spoken of, I found it had purified my soul, instead of blackening it as I had feared. I possessed God after a manner so pure, and so immense, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul had no selfish movement, however plausible, or delicate; both the powers of the mind and the very senses being wonderfully purified. Sometimes I was surprised to find that there appeared not one thought. The imagination formerly so restless, now no more troubled me: I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections. The will, being perfectly dead to all its own appetites, was become void of every human inclination

both natural and spiritual, and only inclined of God to whatever he pleased, and in whatever manner he pleased. This vastitude, or enlargedness, which is not bounded by any thing, however plain and simple it may be, increases every day ; so that my soul in partaking of the qualities of her spouse, seems also to partake of his immensity. My prayer was in an openness and singleness inconceivable. I was as it were borne up on high, out of myself. I believe God was pleased to bless me with this experience, at the beginning of the new life, to make me comprehend, in favour of other souls, this passage of the soul into God.

When I went to confess, I felt such an immersion of the soul into him, that I could scarcely speak. This ascension of the spirit, wherein God draws the soul so powerfully, not into its own inmost recess, but into himself, is not operated till after the *mystic death*, wherein the soul actually comes out of itself to pass into its divine object. I call it death, that is to say, a passage from one thing to another : and it is truly a happy passover for the soul, and its passage into the promised land. The spirit which is created to be united to its own principle or origin, (that is, to God) if it were not stopped by a miracle, its moving quality would cause the body to be drawn after it whithersoever it would, by reason of its impetuosity and noble descent : but God has given it a terrestrial body to serve for a counterpoise. This spirit then, created to be united to its origin, without any medium or interstice, feeling itself drawn by its divine object, tends to it with an extreme violence ; in such sort that God, suspending for some time the power which the body has to hold back the spirit, it follows with ardency : but when it is not sufficiently purified to pass into God, it gradually returns back to itself ; and as the body resumes its own quality, returns to the earth. The saints who have been the most perfect have advanced to that degree, as to have nothing of all this ; and some have lost it towards the end of

their lives, by becoming single and pure as the others, because they then had in reality and permanence, what they had at first only as transient fruitions, in the time of the prevalence or dominion of the body. It is certain then that the soul, by death to itself, passes into its divine object : and it is what I then experienced. I found, the farther I went, the more my spirit was lost in its Sovereign, who attracted it more and more to himself. And he was pleased at first that I should know this for the sake of others and not for myself only. Indeed he drew my soul more and more into himself, till it lost itself entirely out of sight, and could perceive itself no more. It seemed at first to pass into him. As one sees a river pass into the ocean, lose itself in it, its waters for a time distinguished from that of the sea, till it gradually becomes transformed into the same sea, and possesses all its qualities ; so was my soul lost in God, who communicated to it his qualities, having drawn it out of all that it had of its own. Its life is an inconceivable innocence, not known or comprehended of those who are still shut up in themselves (or only live to themselves.)

The joy which such a soul possesses in its God is so great, that it experiences the truth of those words of the royal Prophet, " All they who are in thee, oh Lord, are like persons ravished with joy." To such a soul the words of our Lord seem to be addressed, " Your joy no man shall take from you." It is as it were plunged in a river of peace. Its prayer is continual. Nothing can hinder it from praying to God, or from loving him. It amply verifies these words in the Canticles, " I sleep but my heart waketh ;" for it finds that even sleep itself does not hinder it from praying. Oh unutterable happiness ! Who could ever have thought that a soul, which seemed to be in the utmost misery, should ever find a happiness equal to this ? Oh happy poverty, happy loss, happy nothing, which gives no less than God himself in his own immensity, no more

circumscribed to the limited manner of the creature, but always drawing it out of that, to plunge it wholly into his divine essence.

Then the soul knows that all the states of self-pleasing visions, openings, extacies and raptures, are rather obstacles, that they do not serve this state which is far above them ; because the state which has supports, has pain to lose them ; and yet cannot arrive at this without such loss. In this are verified the words of an experienced saint ; “ When I would,” says he, “ possess nothing *through self-love*, every thing was given me without going after it.” Oh happy dying of the grain of wheat, which makes it produce an hundred fold ! The soul is then so passive, so disposed equally to receive from the hand of God either good or evil, as is astonishing. It receives both the one and the other without any selfish emotions, letting them flow and be lost as they come. They pass away as if they did not touch us.

After I finished my retreat with the Ursulines at Tonon, I returned through Geneva ; and having found no other means of conveyance, the French Resident lent me a horse. As I knew not how to ride on horseback, I made some difficulty of doing it : but as he assured me that it was a very quiet horse, I ventured to mount him. There was a sort of smith, who, looking at me with a wild haggard look, struck the horse a blow on the back, just as I had got upon him, which made him give a leap. He threw me on the ground with such force that they thought I was killed. I fell on my temple. My cheek bone was broke, and two of my teeth driven into my head. I was supported by an invisible hand : and in a little time I mounted as well as I could on another horse, and had a man by my side to keep me up.

My relations left me in peace at Gex, testifying their esteem for me : and as they had heard at Paris of my mirac-

ulous cure, it made a great noise there. Many persons in reputation for sanctity then wrote to me. I received letters from Mademoiselle De Lamoignon, and another young lady, who was so moved with my answer, that she sent me a hundred pistoles for our house, and let me know beside, "that, when we wanted money, I had only to write to her; and that she would send me all I could desire." They talked in Paris of printing an account of the sacrifice I had made, and inserting in it the miracle of my sudden recovery. I do not know what prevented it: but such is the inconstancy of the creature, that this journey, which drew upon me at that time so much applause, has served for a pretext for the strange condemnation which has since passed upon me.

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## CHAPTER V.

*She voluntarily resigns her estate to her relations, in favour of her children. Persecutions by an Ecclesiastic, who prejudices the Bishop of Geneva against her. Her conduct and manner of life at Gex.*

My near kinsfolks did not signify any eager desire for my return. The first thing they proposed to me, a month after my arrival at Gex, was, not only to give up my Guardianship, but to make over all my estate to my children, and to reserve an annuity to myself. This proposition, coming from those who regarded nothing but their own interest, to some might have appeared very displeasing; but it was in no wise so to me. I had not any friend to advise with. I knew not any one whom I could consult about the manner of executing the thing, as I was quite free and willing to do it. It appeared to me that I had now the means of accomplishing the extreme desire I had of being conformable to Jesus Christ, poor, naked, and stript of all. They sent me an article to execute, which had been drawn under

their inspection, and I accordingly signed it, not perceiving some clauses which were inserted therein. It expressed that, when my children should die, I should inherit nothing of my own estate, but it should devolve to my collateral kindred. There were many other things which appeared to be equally to my disadvantage. Though what I had reserved to myself was sufficient to support me in this place, yet it was scarcely enough to do so in some others. I then gave up my estate with more joy, (for being thereby conformed to Jesus Christ,) than they could have by it who obtained it from me. It is what I have never repented of, nor had any uneasiness about. What pleasure to lose all and to quit every thing for God! The love of poverty, thus contracted, is the kingdom of tranquillity.

I forgot to mention, that towards the end of my miserable state of privation, when just ready to enter into newness of life, our Lord illuminated me so clearly to see that the exterior crosses came from him, that I could not harbour any resentment against the persons who procured me them. On the contrary, I felt the tenderness of compassion for them, and had more pain for those which I innocently caused to them, than for any which they had heaped upon me. I saw that these persons feared God too much to oppress me as they did, had they known it. I saw his hand in it, and I felt the pain which they suffered, through the contrariety of their humours. It is hard to conceive the tenderness which God gave me for them, and the desire which I have had to procure them every sort of advantage.

After the accident which befel me, of the fall from the horse, from which I soon wonderfully recovered, the devil began to declare himself more openly my enemy, to break loose and become more outrageous. One night, when I least thought of it, something very monstrous and frightful presented itself. It seemed a kind of face, which was seen

by a glimmering blueish light.\* I know not whether the flame itself composed this horrible appearance, for it was so mixed and passed by so rapidly, that I had not time to examine it. My soul rested in its calm situation and assurance, and it appeared no more. As I rose at midnight to pray, I then heard frightful noises in my chamber, and after I had lain down they were still worse; my bed often shook for a quarter of an hour at a time, and the paper sashes were all burst. Every morning while this continued, they were found shattered and torn, yet I felt no fear. I rose and lighted my wax candle at a lamp which I kept in my chamber, because I had taken the office of sacristan, or (vestry nun) and the care of waking the sisters at the hour they were to rise, without having once failed in it for my indispositions, ever being the first in all the observances: I made use of my little light to look all over the chamber, and at the sashes, at the very time the noise was strongest: as he saw that I was afraid of nothing, he left off all on a sudden, and attacked me no more in person: but he stirred up men against me, and that succeeded far better with him; for he found them disposed to do what he prompted them to, zealously, in as much as they counted it a good thing to do me the worst of injuries.

One of the sisters whom I had brought, a very beautiful girl, contracted an intimacy with an Ecclesiastic, who had authority in this place. At first he inspired her with an aversion for me, being well assured that if she placed confidence in me, I should advise her not to suffer his visits so frequently. As she was about undertaking a religious retreat, the Ecclesiastic was desirous to induce her to make it with him, in order to gain her entire confidence, which would have served as a cloak to his frequent visits. The Bishop of Geneva had given Father la Combe for director

\* Probably this was the contrivance of some evil minded persons to terrify her.



to our house, and as he was going to cause retreats to be made, I desired her to wait for him. As I had gained some share in her esteem, she submitted thereto, even against her inclination, which was to have made it under this Ecclesiastic. I began to talk to her on the subject of inward prayer, and drew her into the practice of this duty. Our Lord gave such a blessing thereto, that this girl, (one of good parts) gave herself to God in right earnest, and with her whole heart: and the retreat completely won her over. She then became more reserved, and on her guard, towards this Ecclesiastic, which exceedingly vexed him. It enraged him both against Father la Combe and me. This proved the source of the persecutions which afterwards befel me. The noise in my chamber ended as that commenced.

This Ecclesiastic, began to talk privately of me, with much contempt. I knew it, but took no notice. There came a certain Friar to see him, who mortally hated Father la Combe, on account of his regularity. These combined together to force me to quit the house, and to become masters of it themselves. All the means they could devise they studied for that purpose.

My manner of life was such, that in the house I did not meddle in affairs at all, leaving the sisters to dispose of the temporals as they pleased. Soon after my entrance into it I received eighteen hundred livres, which a lady, a friend of mine, lent me to complete our furniture, which I had repaid her at my late giving up of my estate. This sum they received, as well as what I had before given them.—I sometimes spoke a little to those who retired thither to become Catholicks, and our Lord favoured with so much benediction what I said to them, that some, whom they knew not before what to make of, became sensible solid women, and exemplary in piety.

I saw that crosses in abundance were likely to fall to my

lot. At the same time, these words came into my mind, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross." I prostrated myself for a long time with my face on the ground, earnestly desiring to receive all thy strokes, Oh thou who spared not thy own son! thou couldst find none but him worthy of thee, and thou still findest in him hearts proper for thee.

A few days after my arrival at Gex, I saw in a sacred and mysterious dream (for as such I very well distinguished it) Father la Combe fastened up to an enormous cross, stripped, in like manner as they paint our Saviour. I saw round it a frightful crowd, which covered me with confusion, and threw back on me the ignominy of his punishment. He seemed to have most pain, but I more reproaches than he. I have since beheld this fully accomplished.

The aforesaid Ecclesiastic won over to his party one of our sisters who was the house-steward, and soon after, the prioress. I was of a very delicate frame, but the good inclination which I had, did not give strength to my body. I had two maids of my own with me to serve me; yet as the community had need of one of them for their cook, and the other to attend the door, and other occasions, I gave them up, not thinking but they would allow them to serve me sometimes, and assist me in things I was not able to do myself; for besides this, I let them still receive all my income, they having had already my first half of this year's annuity; and yet they would not permit either of my maid-servants to do any thing for me. By my office of sacristan I was obliged to sweep the church, which was large, and they would not let any one help me in it. I have several times fainted away over the broom, and have been forced to rest myself in little corners, quite spent. This obliged me to beg them, that they would suffer it sometimes to be swept by some of the lusty country girls which were there, new Catholics, which at last they had the charity to consent

to. But what most embarrassed me was, that I never had washed, and was now obliged to wash all the vestry linen. I took one of my maids to help me, because in attempting it by myself, I had done up the linen most awkwardly. But these sisters pulled her by the arms out of my chamber, telling she her should do her own business. I let it quietly pass, without making any objection to it. The other good sister, that girl I just mentioned, grew more and more fervent, by the practice of prayer, in her dedication of herself to the Lord, more and more tender in her sympathy with me, which irritated this ecclesiastic; insomuch that, after all his impotent attempts here, he went off to Annecy, in order to sow discord, and to effect more mischief to Father la Combe.

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#### CHAPTER VI.

*She retires to the Ursulines, at Tonon. Persecutions still continue. Remarkable discourse between the Bishop of Geneva, and Father la Combe.*

He went directly to the Bishop of Geneva, who, until then, had manifested much esteem and kindness for me, and persuaded him, "that it would be proper to secure me to that house, to oblige me to give up to it the annual income I had reserved to myself; and to engage me thereto by making me prioress." He had gained such an ascendancy over the Bishop, that the people in the country called him the *little Bishop*. Wherefore he drew him to enter heartily, and with zeal into his proposition, and to resolve to bring it about, whatever it should cost him.

The Ecclesiastic, having so far carried his point, and being swelled with his success in this first essay, no longer kept any measures in regard to me. He began with causing all the letters which I sent, and those which were directed

to me, to be stopped ; in order to have it in his power to make what impressions he pleased on the minds of others, and that I should neither be able to know it, nor defend myself, nor to give or send to my friends any account of the manner in which I was treated. One of the maids I had brought with me, wanted to return, as she could have no rest in this place, and the other that remained was infirm, and too much taken up by others to help me in any thing. As Father la Cômbe was to come, I thought he would soften the violent spirit of this man, and that he would give me proper advice.

In the mean time they proposed to me the engagement, and the post of prioress. I answered, "that as to the engagement, it was impossible for me, since my vocation was elsewhere. And I could not regularly be the prioress, till after passing through the noviciate, in which they had all served two years before their being engaged ; that when I should have done as much, I should see how God would inspire me." The prioress replied, pretty tartly, "that if I would ever leave them, it were best to do it immediately." Yet I did not offer to retire, but continued still to act as usual. However I saw the sky gradually thickening, and storms gathering on every side. The prioress then affected a milder air. She assured me, "that she had a desire, as well as I, to go to Geneva ; that I should not engage, but only promise her to take her with me, if I went thither." She pretended to place a great confidence in me, and professed a high esteem for me. I was very free, and told her "that I had no attraction for the manner of life of the new Catholicks, by reason of the intrigues from without. Several things did not please me, because I wanted them to be upright in every thing." She signified, "that she did not consent to such things, but because that Ecclesiastic told her they were necessary, to give the house a credit in distant parts, and to draw charities from Paris."

I answered, "that if we walked uprightly, God would never fail us. He would sooner do miracles for us." I remarked to her, "that when, instead of sincerity, they had recourse to artifice, charity grew cold, and kept herself shut up. It is God alone who inspires charity : how then is it to be obtained by disguises?"

Soon after this, Father la Combe came to see about the retreats. (This was the third, and last time that he came to Gex.) The prioress, after she had been tampering a good deal with me hereupon, having wrote him a long letter before his coming, and received his answer, which she shewed me, now went to ask him whether she would one day be united to me at Geneva. He answered with his usual uprightness, "Our Lord has made it known to me that you shall never be established at Geneva." And soon after she died. When he had uttered this declaration, she appeared enraged against both him and me, in a surprising manner. She went directly to that Ecclesiastic, who was in a chamber with the house-steward ; and they took their measures together, to oblige me either to engage or retire. They thought that I would sooner engage than retire, and they narrowly watched my letters.

He requested Father la Combe, (which was only with a design to lay snares for him,) to preach ; which he did on this text, "The king's daughter is beautiful within." That Ecclesiastic, who was present with his confidant, said, "It was preached against him, and was full of errors." He drew up eight propositions, and inserted in them what the other had not preached, adjusting them as maliciously as he possibly could ; and sent them to one of his friends at Rome, to get them examined by the sacred congregation, and by the Inquisition. Though he had very ill digested them, at Rome they were pronounced good. This greatly disappointed and vexed him. After having been treated in this manner, and opprobriously reviled by him in the most

offensive terms, the father, with much mildness and humility told him, "that he was going to Annecy, about some affairs of the convent; and that if he had any thing to write to the Bishop of Geneva, he would take care of his letter." He desired him then to wait a while, as he was going to write. The good father had the patience to wait above three hours, without hearing from him; though the other had treated him exceedingly ill, so far as to take out of his hands a letter I had given him for that worthy hermit I have mentioned. Hearing he was not gone, but was still in the church, I went to him, and begged him to send to see if the other's packet was ready; because the day was so far gone, that he would be obliged to lodge by the way. When the messenger arrived, he found a servant of the Ecclesiastic on horseback, ordered to go full speed, to be at Annecy before the father. He then returned an answer, "that he had no letters to send by him." This was so contrived, that he might gain time to prepossess the Bishop for his purposes. Father la Combe then set off for Annecy, and on his arrival found the Bishop prepossessed, and in an ill humour. This was the substance of the discourse which they had:

*Bishop.* "You must absolutely engage this lady to give what she has to the house at Gex, and make her the prioress of it."

*F. la Combe.* "My Lord, you know what she has told you herself of her vocation, both at Paris and in this country. I therefore do not believe that she will engage; nor is there any likelihood that, after having quitted her all, in the hope of entering Geneva, she should engage elsewhere, and thereby put it out of her power to accomplish the designs of God in regard to her. She has offered to stay with those sisters as a boarder. If they are willing to keep her as such, she will remain with them, if not, she is resolved

to retire into some convent, till God shall dispose of her otherwise."

*Bishop.* "I know all that; but I likewise know that she is so very obedient, that, if you order her, she will assuredly do it."

*F. la Combe.* "It is for that reason, my Lord, that one ought to be very cautious in the commands which they lay on her; can I induce a foreign lady, who, for all her subsistence, has nothing but a small pittance she has reserved to herself, to give that up in favour of a house which is not yet established, and perhaps never will be? If the house happen to fail, or be no longer of use, what shall that lady live on? Shall she go to the hospital? And indeed this house will not long be of any use, since there are no protestants in any part of France near it."

*Bishop.* "These reasons are good for nothing. If you do not make her do what I have said, I will degrade and suspend you." This manner of speaking somewhat surprised the father, who well enough understood the rules of suspension, which is not executed on such things. He replied,

"My Lord, I am ready, not only to suffer the suspension, but even death, rather than do any thing against my conscience."—Having said this, he retired.

He directly sent me this account by an express, to the end that I might take proper measures thereon. I had no other course to take but to retire into a convent. I received a letter, informing me that the nun to whom I had entrusted my daughter, was fallen sick, and desiring me to go to her for some time. I shewed this letter to the sisters of our house, telling them, "I had a mind to go; but that if they ceased to persecute me, and would leave Father la Combe in peace, I would return as soon as the mistress of my daughter should be recovered." Instead of this, they persecuted me more

violently, wrote to Paris against me, stopped all my letters, and sent libels against me round the country.

The day after my arrival at Tonon, Father la Combe set off for the valley of Aoust\* to preach there in the Lent.— He had come to take leave of me, and told me, “he should go from thence to Rome, and perhaps not return, as his superiors might detain him there; that he was sorry to leave me in a strange country, without succour, and persecuted of every one.” I replied, “My father, that gives me no pain, I use the creatures for God, and by his order.— Through his mercy, I do very well without them, when he withdraws them: and I am very well content never to see you, if such is his will, and to abide under persecution.” He said he went off well satisfied to see me in such a disposition, and then took his leave and departed.

As soon as I got to the Ursulines, a very aged and pious priest who for twenty years past had not come out of his solitude, came to find me. He told me, “that he had had a vision relative to me; that he had seen a woman in a boat on the lake; and that the Bishop of Geneva, with some of his priests, exerted all their efforts to sink the boat she was in, and to drown her; that he continued in this vision above two hours, with pain of mind; that it seemed sometimes as if this woman were quite drowned, as for some time she quite disappeared; but afterwards she appeared again, and ready to escape the danger, while the Bishop never ceased to pursue her. This woman was always equally calm: but he never saw her entirely free from him. From whence I conclude, added he, that the Bishop will persecute you without intermission.”

† I had an intimate friend, wife of that governor of whom

\* Aoust, a Dutchy in Piedmont, at the foot of the Alps, in the north-east of Italy, 65 miles south-east of Geneva, and subject to the king of Sardinia.

† It appears, that she was an instrument in the Lord's hand, in this place, viz. Tonon, of great spiritual benefit to several young women of the village, from what she occasionally mentions farther on, viz. in Chap. xviii.



I have made some mention. As she saw I had quitted every thing for God, she had a warm desire to follow me.— With diligence did she dispose of all her effects, and settle her affairs, in order to come to me: but when she heard of the persecution, she was discouraged from coming to a place, from whence she thought I should be obliged to retire :—And soon after she died.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*All her letters are intercepted. The Bishop of Geneva approves of her design, of doing all the good in her power in his diocese, and gives a remarkable testimony of Father la Combe. After which he suffers his sentiments to be quite changed again, into a base prejudice.*

AFTER Father la Combe was gone, the persecution raised against me, became more violent. But the Bishop of Geneva still shewed me some civilities, as well to try whether he could prevail on me to do what he desired, as to sound how matters passed in France, and to prejudice the minds of the people there against me, always preventing me from receiving the letters sent me. The Ecclesiastic and his family had twenty-two intercepted letters, opened on their table. There was one wherein was sent me a Letter of Attorney to sign, of immediate consequence. They were obliged to put it under another cover, and send it to me. The Bishop wrote to Father la Mothe, and had no difficulty to draw him into his party. For he was displeased with me on two accounts: first, that I had not settled on him a pension, as he expected, and as he told me very roughly several times: and secondly, that I did not take his advice in every thing; beside some other interests he had in view. He at once declared against me. The

Bishop made him his confidant; and it was he who uttered and spread abroad the news about me, which they sent him. They imagined, as was supposed, that I should annul the donation I had made, if I returned; that having the support of friends, in France, I should find the means of breaking it; but in that they were much mistaken; for I had no thought of loving any thing but the poverty of Jesus Christ. For some time yet the Father acted with caution towards me. He wrote me some letters; which he addressed to the Bishop of Geneva, and they agreed so together, that he was the only person from whom I received any letters, to which I returned very moving answers: yet he, instead of being touched with them, became only more irritated against me.

The Bishop continued to treat me with a shew of respect: and yet at the same time he wrote to many persons at Paris; as did also the sisters of the house to all those persons of piety who had wrote letters to me, to bias them as much as possible against me, and to avoid the blame which ought naturally to fall upon them, for having so unworthily treated a person who had given up every thing to devote herself to the service of that diocese; for after I had done this, and was not in a condition to return to France, they treated me extremely ill in every respect. There was scarce any kind of false or fabulous story, likely to gain any credit, which they did not invent to cry me down. Beside my having no way to make the truth known in France, our Lord inspired me with a willingness to suffer every thing, without justifying myself; so that in my case nothing was heard but condemnation, without any vindication. It was not difficult, indeed, to do this to one who did not defend herself.

I was in this convent, and had seen Father La Combe no farther than I have mentioned; yet they did not cease to publish, both of him and me, the most scandalous stories;

as utterly false as any thing could be, for he was then a hundred and fifty leagues from me.

For some time I was ignorant of this. As I knew that all my letters were kept from me, I ceased to wonder at receiving none. I lived in this house with my little daughter in a sweet repose, which was a very great favour of Providence: for my daughter had forgot her French, and among the little girls from the mountains had contracted a wild look and disagreeable manners. Her wit, sense and judgment were indeed surprising, and her disposition exceedingly good. There were only some little fits of peevishness, which they had caused to rise in her, through certain contrarieties out of season, caresses ill applied, and for want of knowing the proper manner of education. But the Lord provided in regard to her, as I shall tell. During this time my mind was preserved calm and resigned to God. My silence was great; and for some time I had leisure to taste of and to enjoy the Divinity in my little cell: afterwards that good sister almost continually interrupted me; and I answered every thing she desired of me, both out of condescension, and from a principle which I had to obey like a child.

When I was in my apartment, without any other director than our Lord by his Spirit, however favoured therein, as soon as one of my little children came to knock at my door, he required me to admit the interruption. He showed me that it is not the actions in themselves which please him, but the constant ready obedience to every discovery of his will, even in the minutest things, with such a suppleness, as not to adhere to any thing, but still to turn with him at every call. My soul was then, I thought, like a leaf, or a feather, which the wind moves what way soever it pleases; and the Lord never suffers a soul so dependent on, and dedicated to him, to be deceived.

Most part of men appear to me very unjust, who readily resign themselves to another man, and look upon that as prudence. They confide in men who are nothing, and boldly say, "Such a person cannot be deceived:" and if one speak of a soul wholly resigned to God, which follows him faithfully, they cry aloud, "That person is deceived with his resignation." Oh my divine Lord! dost thou want either strength, fidelity, love, or wisdom, to conduct those who trust in thee, and who are thy dearest children? I have seen men bold enough to say, "Follow me, and you shall not be misled." How sadly are those men misled themselves by their presumption! and how much sooner should I go to him who would be afraid of misleading me: who trusting neither to his learning nor experience, would rely upon God only!

Our Lord shewed me, in a dream, two ways by which souls steer their course, under the figure of two drops of water. The one appeared to me of an unparalleled beauty, brightness and purity; the other to have also a brightness, yet full of little fibres or streaks; both good to quench thirst; the former altogether pleasant, but the latter not so perfectly agreeable. By the former is represented *the way of pure and naked Faith*, which pleases the Spouse much; it is so pure, so clear from all self-love. The way of openings or gifts is not so; and yet it is that in which many enlightened souls walk, and into which they had drawn Father la Combe. But God shewed me, that he had given him to me, to draw him into one more pure and perfect. I spoke before the sisters, he being present, of the way of Faith, how much more glorious it was to God, and advantageous for the soul, than all those gifts, openings and assurances, which ever cause us to live to self. This discouraged them at first, and him also. I saw they were pained, as they have confessed to me since. I said no more of it at that time. But as he is a person of great humility,

he bid me unfold what I had wanted to say to him. I told him a part of my dream of the two drops of water ; yet he did not then enter into what I said, the time for it being not yet come : but when he came to Gex, to make the retreats, our Lord made known to me, as I was at prayer in the night, that I was *his mother*, and he *my son*. I told him the circumstances of a certain time past ; and he recollected that it was the time of so extraordinary a touch with which the Lord favoured him, that he was quite overwhelmed with contrition. This gave him such an interior renovation, that having retired to pray, in a very ardent frame of mind, he was filled with joy, and seized with a powerful emotion, which made him enter into what I had told him of the way of faith. I give these things, as they happen to come to my remembrance, without carrying them on in order.

After Easter, in the year 1682, the Bishop came to Tonon. I had occasion to speak to him, which when I had done, our Lord so pointed my words that he appeared thoroughly convinced ; but the persons, who had influenced him before, returned to the charge. He then pressed me very much to return to Gex, and to take the place of Prioress. I gave him the reasons against it which I have mentioned before. I then appealed to him, as a Bishop, desiring him to take care to regard nothing but God in what he should say to me. He was struck with a kind of confusion : and then said to me, "Since you speak to me in such a manner, I cannot advise you to it. It is not for us to go contrary to our vocations ; but do good, I pray you, to this house." I promised him to do it ; and having received my pension, I sent them a hundred pistoles, with a design of doing the same as long as I should be in the diocese. The Bishop said to me farther, "I love Father la Combe. He is a true servant of God : and he has told me many things to which I was forced to assent ; for I felt them in myself : but, added he, when I say so, they tell

me I am mistaken, and that before the end of six months he will run mad." He told me, "he approved of the nuns, which had been under the care and instruction of Father la Combe, finding them to come up fully to what he had heard of them." From thence I took occasion to tell him "that in every thing he ought to refer himself to his own breast, or to the instructions there immediately received, and not to others." He agreed to what I said, and acknowledged it to be right: and yet no sooner was he returned, than so great was his weakness, that he re-entered into his former dispositions. He sent the same Ecclesiastic to tell me that I must engage myself at Gex; and that it was his sentiment. I answered, that I was determined to follow the counsel he had given me, when he had spoke to me *as from* God, since now they made him speak only *as man*.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*The tranquillity of her mind in the midst of probations. Her remarks thereupon, and on the apostolic life.*

My soul was in a state of entire resignation, and very great content, in the midst of such violent tempests. Those persons came to tell me a hundred extravagant stories against Father la Combe. The more they said to me to his disadvantage, the more esteem I felt for him. I answered them, "Perhaps I may never see him again; but I shall ever be glad to do him justice. It is not he who hinders me from engaging at Gex. It is only because I know it to be none of my vocation." They asked me, "Who could know that better than the Bishop?" They farther told me, "I was under a deception, and my state was good for nothing." This gave me no uneasiness, having referred to God the care of requiring, and of executing

what he requires, and in whatever manner he demands it. A soul in this state seeks nothing for itself, but all for God. Some may say, "What then does this soul?" It leaves itself to be conducted by God's providences and creatures. Outwardly its life seems quite common; inwardly, it is wholly resigned to the divine will. The more every thing appears adverse, and even desperate, the more calm it is, in spite of the annoyance and pain of the senses and of the creatures, which for some time after the new life, raise some clouds and obstructions, as I have already signified. But when the soul is entirely passed into its original Being, all these things no more cause any separation or partition. It finds no more of that impurity which came from self seeking, from a human manner of acting, from an unguarded word, from any warm emotion or eagerness, which caused such a mist, as it then could neither prevent nor remedy, having so often experienced its own efforts to be useless, and even hurtful, as they did nothing else but still more and more defile it. There is in such case no other way or means of remedy, but in waiting till the sun of righteousness dissipate those fogs, as the whole work of purification comes from God only. Afterwards, this conduct becomes natural; and then the soul can say with the royal prophet, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in him will confide." For then, though assaulted on every side by evil spirits, it continues fixed as a rock. Having no will but for what God sees meet to order, be it what it may, high or low, great or small, sweet or bitter, honour, wealth, life, or any other object, what can shake its peace? It is true, our nature is so crafty that it worms itself through every thing; and a selfish sight is like the basilisk's; it destroys.

Trials are suited to the state of the soul, whether conducted by lights, gifts, or ecstasies, &c. or by the entire de-

struction of self in *the way of naked faith*. Both these states are found in St. Paul. He tells us, "And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." He prayed thrice, and it was said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness." He proved also another state when he thus expressed himself, "Oh wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" To which he replies, "I thank God *it is done* through Jesus Christ our Lord." ' It is he who conquers death in us through his own life. Then there is no longer a sting in death, or thorn in the flesh, capable of of paining or hurting any more.

At first indeed, and for a pretty long time after, the soul sees that *nature* wants to take some part with it in its trials ; and then its fidelity consists in withholding it, without allowing it the least indulgence, till it leaves every thing to go on with God in purity as it comes from him. Till the soul be in this state, it always sullies, by its own mixture, the operation of God ; like those rivulets which contract the corruption of the places they pass through ; but, flowing in a pure place, they then remain in the purity of their source. Unless God through experience make known this guidance to the soul, it can never comprehend it.

Oh, if souls had courage enough to resign themselves to the work of purification, without having any weak and foolish pity on themselves, what a noble, rapid, and happy progress would they make ! But few are willing to lose the earth. If they advance some steps ; as soon as the sea is ruffled, they are dejected, they cast anchor, and often desist from the prosecution of the voyage. Such disorders doth selfish interest and *self-love* occasion. It is of consequence not to look too much at one's own state, not to lose courage, not to afford any nourishment to *self-love*, which is so



deep-rooted, that its empire is not easily demolished. Often the idea which a man falsely conceives of the greatness of his advancement in divine experience, makes him want it to be seen and known of men, and to wish to see the very same perfection in others. He conceives too low ideas of others, and too high of his own state. Then it becomes a pain to him to converse with people too human ; whereas a soul truly mortified and resigned would rather converse with the worst, by the order of Providence, than with the best, of its own choice ; wanting only to see or to speak to any as Providence directs, knowing well, that all beside, far from helping, only hurt it, or at least prove very unfruitful to it.

What then renders this soul so perfectly content ? It neither knows, nor wants to know, any thing but what God calls it to. Herein it enjoys divine content, after a manner vast, immense, independent of exterior events ; more satisfied in its humiliation, and in the opposition of all creatures, by the order of Providence, than on the throne of its own choice.

Oh thou, who alone conductest these souls, and who canst teach ways so hidden and lost, so contrary to the usual spirit of devotion, which is full of itself and its own virtues ;—bring hither souls innumerable, which may love thee in the utmost purity. Every other love, however vehement and ardent, is not the pure love, but a love mixed with selfishness. These souls are the delight of God, “who delights to be with the children of men,” that is, with souls child-like and innocent, such as are set free from pride, ascribing to themselves only nothingness and sin. They are one in God, to such a degree, that they look at him only, and every thing else in him. Beautiful is that passage of Jeremiah, “He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence because he hath borne his yoke upon him.”

What makes the perfection of one state, is only the weak and imperfect beginning of that which follows it, as in the mounting up from a lower class to a higher. The child's state has its beauties and charms in its season, as have all the succeeding stages of the divine life, when rightly disposed and directed. St. Paul says, "The law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ." But when we are come to him, that master is then rendered of no use. It is he who brings into *the perfect liberty of the sons of God*, which liberty flows from the Spirit of God. But what are those souls designed for, which are so dear to him? "To be conformed to the image of his Son."

It is here that the apostolic life begins. But is every one called to that state?—Very few, indeed, as far as I can comprehend; and, of the few that are called to it, fewer still walk in true purity. There is a way of lights, gifts and graces, a holy life in which the creature appears all admirable: as this life is more apparent, so it is more esteemed, by such at least as have not the purest light. The souls which walk in the other path are often very little known, for a length of time: as it was with Jesus Christ himself, till the last years of his life. Oh if I could express what I conceive of this state! But I can only stammer about it,—I have wandered far from my story, but am not capable of doing otherwise.

## CHAPTER IX.

*She writes some letters to the Bishop of Geneva, and to Father la Mothe, but in vain. More oppositions from that vile Ecclesiastic. She is visited and succoured by a sister of hers, but exercised by a Nun, who vainly fancies herself to be highly advanced in piety.— Father la Combe, newly returned from Rome, comes to see her. She receives an invitation from the Archbishop of Sens.*

BEING, as I have said, with the Ursulines at Tonon, after having spoken to the Bishop of Geneva, and seeing how he changed, just as others turned him, I wrote to him and to Father la Mothe; but all my pains were useless. The more I endeavoured to accommodate matters, the more the Ecclesiastic tried to confound them. I therefore ceased to meddle.

I dreamed that I drew a cord which seemed at first of diamond; but afterwards it appeared to be of iron. I saw storms coming on every side; yet I rested in a profound peace, waiting for the strokes which I could not avoid. I beheld the tempest descend impetuously, without my having done the least thing to contribute to it, or seeing any thing for me to do but peaceably to suffer. One day I was told that the Ecclesiastic had won over the good girl whom I dearly loved. So strong a desire I had for her perfection that it had cost me much. I should not have felt the death of a child so much as her loss: at the same time I was told how to hinder it, but that human way of acting was repugnant to my inward sense; and these words arose in my heart, *Except the Lord build the House, &c.*

And indeed he provided herein himself, hindering her from yielding to this deceitful man, after a manner to be admired, and very thwarting to the designs of him and his associates. As long as I was with her, she still seem-

ed wavering and fearful: but oh the infinite goodness of God, to preserve without our aid, what without his we should inevitably lose!—I was no sooner separated from her, but she became *immoveable*.

As for me, there scarce passed a day but they treated me with new insults; their assaults came on me at unawares. The new Catholics, by the instigation of the Bishop of Geneva, the Ecclesiastic, and the sisters at Gex, stirred up all the persons of piety against me, I had but little uneasiness on my account. If I could have had it on any, it would have been on that of Father la Combe, whom they vilely aspersed, though he was absent. They even made use of his absence, to upset all the good he had done in the country, by his missions and pious labours, which was inconceivably great. At first I was too ready to vindicate him, thinking it justice to do it. I did not do it at all for myself; and our Lord shewed me that I must cease doing it for him, in order to leave him to be more thoroughly annihilated; because from thence he would draw a greater glory, than ever he had done from his own reputation.

Every day they invented some new slander. No kind of stratagem, or malicious device in their power, did they omit. They came to surprise and ensnare me in my words; but God guarded me so well, that therein they only discovered their own malevolence. I had no consolation from the creatures. She who had the care of my daughter behaved roughly to me. Such are the persons who regulate themselves only by their gifts and openings. When they do not see things presently succeed, as they regard them only by their success, and are not willing to have the affront of their pretensions being thought uncertain, and liable to mistake, they seek *without* for supports. As for me who pretended to nothing, I thought all succeeded well, inasmuch as all tended to self-annihilation. On another side, the maid I

had brought, and who stayed with me, grew tired out. Wanting to go back again, she stunned me with her complaints, thwarting and chiding me from morning till night, upbraiding me with what I had left, and coming to a place where I was good for nothing. I was obliged to bear all her ill-humours and the clamours of her tongue.

Father la Mothe wrote to me that I was a rebel to my Bishop, staying in his diocese only to give him pain. Indeed, I saw there was nothing for me to do here, so long as the Bishop should be against me. I did what I could to gain his good will; but it was impossible on any other terms than the engagement he demanded, and that I knew to be my duty not to do. This, joined to the poor education of my daughter, affected my heart. When any glimmering of hope appeared, it soon vanished; and I gained strength from a sort of despair.

During this time Father la Combe was at Rome, where he was received with so much honour, and his doctrine so highly esteemed, that the Sacred Congregation was pleased to take his sentiments on some points of doctrine, which were found to be so just, and so clear, that it followed *them*. Meanwhile the sister would take no care of my daughter, and when I took care of her, she was displeased. I was not able, by any means to prevail on her to promise me to try to prevent her contracting bad habits. However, I hoped that Father la Combe, at his return, would bring every thing in order, and renew my consolation. Yet I left it all to God.

About July, 1682, my sister, who was an Ursuline, got permission to come to the waters. She brought a maid with her, which was very seasonable. My sister assisted in the education of my daughter, but she had frequent jarring with her tutoress—I laboured but in vain for peace. By some instances which I met with in this place, I saw clearly that it is not great gifts which sanctify, unless they

be accompanied with a profound humility; and that death to every thing is infinitely more beneficial; for there was one who thought herself at the summit of perfection, but has discovered since, by the trials which have befallen her, that she was yet very far from it. Oh my God, how true it is that we may have of thy gifts, and yet be very imperfect, and full of ourselves!

How very straight is the gate which leads to a life in God! how little and stript of every thing one must be to pass through it, it being nothing else but death to ourselves! But when passed through it, what enlargements do we find! David saith, "He brought me forth into a large place." And what is this but that infinite Being, in whom all other beings terminate? And it was through humiliation and abasement that he was brought hither.

Father la Combe, on his arrival, came to see me. The first thing he said, was about his own weakness, and that I must return. He added, "that all seemed dark, and no likelihood that God would make use of me in this country." The Bishop of Geneva wrote to Father la Mothe to get me to return, and he wrote to me accordingly to do it. The first Lent which I passed with the Ursulines, I had very great pains in my eyes: for that same imposthume which I formerly had between the eye and the nose, returned upon me thrice over. The bad air, and the chamber which I was in, too open to it, contributed hereto. My head was frightfully swelled, but great was my inward joy. It was a thing somewhat particular, to see many good creatures, who did not know me, love and pity me: and all the rest enraged against me, and most of them on reports entirely false, neither knowing me, nor why they so hated me. To swell the stream of affliction yet more, my daughter fell sick and was likely to die: there were but little hopes of her, when her mistress also fell ill. My soul, leaving all to God, continued to rest in a quiet and peaceable habita-

tion. O principal and sole object of my love! Were there never any other reward, of what little services we do, or of the marks of homage we render thee, than this fixed state above the vicissitudes in the world, is it not enough? The senses indeed are sometimes ready to start aside, and to run off like truants; but every trouble flies before the soul which is entirely subjected to God. By speaking of a fixed state, I do not mean one which can never decline or fall, that being only in Heaven. I call it fixed and permanent, compared with the states which have preceded it, which were full of vicissitudes and variations. I do not exclude a state of suffering in the senses, or arising from superficial impurity, which remains to be done away, and which one may compare to gold *refined in its substance*, which yet may contract spots on the outside. That gold has no more need to be purified in the fire, having undergone that operation; but needs only be cleansed without. So it seemed to be with me at that time.

There is also a pain in this state, which is inflicted of God. All the crosses and troubles from without do no more to it than only graze the skin, when compared to this. The soul which is redeemed both from every resistance of the divine will, and from every selfish practice, even of good, has nothing more to fear, or to suffer, from men or devils, though they discharge all their fury on it. Against such a soul, indeed, all hell is stirred up, and yet it suffers little by all this. Nor could these have any power, were it not given them from above. Jesus Christ bore all the avenging justice of God: and it needed God to bear that weight.— So it needs a soul transformed and passed into God, to bear the weight of the Father's justice. Such are the souls destined to be victims hereof, and "to fill up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ, for his body sake which is the Church." But what is there behind of his sufferings, since he himself said, "It is finished," except the

extension thereof in his members? Jesus Christ, in the garden, suffered exceedingly, both from the withdrawing of God his Father, and from the weight of the sins of all mankind: so, in his members, their unity with the will of God is so much the greater, as it is less perceived through the weight and force of their sufferings.

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## CHAPTER X.

*Her daughter, seized with the small-pox and purples, soon recovers.*

*Quarrel between her sister and daughter's mistress. A digression on the source and causes of tranquillity, and of troubles which souls of all conditions find.*

My daughter had the small-pox and the purples. They sent for a physician from Geneva, who gave her over. Father la Combe then came in to visit and pray by her. He gave her his blessing; and soon after she wonderfully recovered. The persecutions of the new Catholicks against me, continued and increased: yet, for all that, I did not fail to do them all the good in my power. My daughter's mistress came often to converse with me, but much imperfection appeared in her discourses, though they were on religious subjects. Father la Combe regulated many things in regard to my daughter, which vexed her mistress so much, that her former friendship was turned into coldness. She had grace, but suffered nature too frequently to prevail. I told her my thoughts respecting her faults, as I was inwardly directed to do: but though, at that time, God enlightened her to see the truth of what I said, and she has been more enlightened since; yet the return of her coldness towards me ensued upon it. The debates between her and my sister grew more tart and violent. My daughter, who was only six years and a half old, by her little dexterities, found a way to please them both, choosing to do her exercises



twice over, first with the one, then with the other, which continued not long; for as her mistress generally neglected her, doing things at one time, and leaving them at another, she was reduced to learn only what my sister and I taught her. Indeed the vivacity of my sister was so excessive, that without a particular grace, it was hard to suit one's self to it: and yet she appeared to me to surmount herself in many things. Formerly I could scarce bear her manners; but I have since loved every thing in God, who has given me a very great facility to bear the faults of my neighbour, with a readiness to please and oblige every one, and such a compassion for their calamities or distresses as I never had before.

More easily did I bear the great faults of imperfect souls, than very little ones in such as God had begun to draw toward perfection. I feel my heart enlarged with tenderness towards the first, and a certain firmness in regard to the others, not to tolerate in them faults which are so much the more dangerous, as they less distrust them on account of their subtilty. Though it seems that my miseries ought to impose silence on me; I cannot forbear, without suffering much, to reprove those souls for their defects. The more any soul is favoured with eminent grace, the more nearly is it united to me; the more violent also is the weight and suffering I feel for it, if it slip or turn aside ever so little. I discern its foundation and its failings, as if they were outwardly shewn or set before me. I mean the inward failings of the mind, for others surprise me not. This view diminishes not the esteem I have for the persons; but it makes me know what they want, and obliges me often to tell it to them.

I have no difficulty to use condescension with imperfect persons; I should be secretly smitten, if I failed therein: but with souls of grace I cannot bear this human manner of acting, nor suffer long and frequent conversations. It is

a case which few persons are capable of, and which is scarce known. Some religious persons say that these conversations are of great service. I believe it may be true for some times, but not for all ; for there is a period wherein it hurts, especially when it is of our own choice ; the human inclination corrupting every thing. The same things which would be profitable, when God, by his Spirit, draws to them, become quite otherwise, when we of ourselves enter into them. This appears to me so clear, that I prefer being a whole day with the worst of persons, in obedience to God, before being one hour with the best, only from choice and a human inclination.

The order of divine providence makes the whole rule and conduct of a soul entirely devoted to God. While it faithfully gives itself up thereto, it will do all things right and well, and will have every thing it wants, without its own care ; because God, in whom it confides, makes it *every moment* do what he requires, and furnishes the occasions proper for it. God loves what is of his own order, and of his own will, not according to the idea of the merely rational or even enlightened man ; for he hides these persons from the eyes of others, in order to preserve them in that hidden purity for himself.

But how comes it that such souls commit any faults ? because they are not faithful, in giving themselves up to *the present moment*. Often too eagerly bent on something, or wanting to be over faithful, they slide into many faults, which they can neither foresee nor avoid. Does God then leave souls which confide in him ? Surely no. Sooner would he work a miracle to hinder them from falling, if they were resigned enough to him. They may be resigned as to the general will, and yet fail as to *the present moment*. Being out of the order of God, they fall. They renew such falls as long as they continue out of that divine order : when they return into it, all goes right and well.

Most assuredly, if such souls were faithful enough, not to let any of the *moments of the order of God*, slip over, they would not thus fall. This appears to me as clear as the day. As a dislocated bone out of the place in which the economy of divine wisdom had fixed it, gives continual pain till it is restored to its proper order, so the many troubles in life, come from the soul not abiding in its place, and not being content with the order of God, and what is afforded therein from moment to moment! If men rightly knew this secret, they would all be fully content and satisfied. But alas! instead of being content with what they have, they are ever wishing for what they have not; while the soul, which enters into the divine light, begins to be in paradise! It is *the order of God*, which renders all the saints infinitely content, though very unequal in glory!—From whence comes it that so many poor indigent persons are so contented, and that princes and potentates, who abound to profusion, are so wretched and unhappy? It is because the man who is not content with what he has, will never be without craving desires; and he who is the prey of an unsatisfied desire, can never be content.

All souls have more or less of strong and ardent desires, except those which are in *the divine moment*. Some have good desires, as to suffer martyrdom for God; others thirst for the salvation of their neighbour, and some pant to see God in glory. All this is excellent: but he who rests in *the divine moment*, though exempt from all these desires, is infinitely more content, and glorifies God more. The moment of suffering is the order of God, and the desire of what one has, does not accompany the thing itself. It is written concerning Jesus Christ, when he drove out of the temple those who profaned it, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." It was in that moment of the order of God, that these words had their effect. How many times had Jesus Christ been in the temple without such a

conduct? Does not he occasionally say of himself, that *his hour was not yet come?*

The saints in glory, ever desire, and ever possess God—Yet this can hardly be called a desire; it is rather an appetite which the present good produces, and instead of being restless or painful, but augments the delight of enjoyment:—It is an energy or flight of the spirit, that enjoys and advances incessantly in God, discovering still new and transporting beauties in him. Eternity can never exhaust these infinite treasures of that beauty, which is ever ancient and new. What they have once known, they know eternally, and yet every moment unfolds and discovers new scenes of wonder, and glory, and ever varying delights!

The tendency of the soul to its centre, is so strong, that all the impetuosity which we see in inanimate bodies to return to theirs, are but faint shadows of this bent of the soul to its origin,—for the soul being highly superior, is consequently more powerful in its attraction. But God being infinite, his attraction is unspeakable.

From this infinite attraction of God, as well as the bent of the soul to follow the draught of the central force, one may judge of the pain of those souls, which are stopped in this violent bent, more or less, according as the obstacles, which hinder them from becoming lost in God, are more or less powerful: as also of the pain of souls in hell, a pain so much the greater as it is accompanied with the despair of ever being united to their centre. The reason we do not feel in this life the strong weight of our separation from, or the force of this powerful attraction to, our centre, is because of the body, which, amusing itself with created objects, procures a diversion, and takes away the attention of the soul from this attracting virtue of the centre, till the inquietude of its separation hinders it from finding any peaceful rest on earth. Souls in purifying, suffer no longer than till the fault or obstruction is taken away—for

then the pain ceases, and the degree of their suffering is just in proportion to the guilt or hindrance, which prevents their re-union. And after a fall, they suffer more or less, according to the quality of the fault.—But I wander immoderately.

End of the year 1682.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*Several remarkable instances of the care of Providence. Duplicity of the Bishop of Geneva. Her own exemptions from all trouble of mind. She writes her treatise of Torrents.*

AFTER Father la Combe was returned from Rome, well approved, and furnished with testimonials of his life and doctrine, he performed his functions of preaching and confessing as usual. To him I confessed; and he told me at first that I must return, as I have mentioned. I gave him an account of what I had done and suffered in his absence, and what care God had taken of all my concerns. I saw his Providence incessantly extended to the very smallest things. After having been several months without any news of my papers, when some pressed me to write, and blamed my neglect, an invisible hand held me back; my peace and confidence were great herein. I received a letter from the Ecclesiastic at home, which informed me that he had orders to come and see me, and bring me my papers. I had sent for a pretty considerable bundle of things from Paris, for my daughter. I heard they were lost on the lake, and could learn no further tidings about them.

But I gave myself no trouble, I always thought they would be found. The man who had taken the charge of them, made a search after them a whole month, in all the environs, without hearing any news about them. At the end of three months they were brought to me, having been

found in the house of a poor man, who had not opened them, nor knew who brought them thither. Once, I had sent for all the money which was to serve me a whole year; the person who had been to receive cash for the bill of exchange, having put that money in two bags on horseback, forgot that it was there, and gave the horse to a little boy to lead. The money fell from the horse in the middle of the market at Geneva. That instant I arrived, coming on the other side, and having alighted from my litter, the first thing I found was my money, in walking over it: what was surprising, a great throng was in this place, and not one had perceived it. Many such things have attended me, which, to avoid prolixity, I pass by. These may suffice, to shew the continual protection of God.

The Bishop of Geneva continued to persecute me. When he wrote to me, it was with politeness and thanks for my charities at Gex: while at the same time, he said to others, "I gave nothing to that house." He wrote against me to the Ursulines with whom I lived, charging them to hinder me from having any conferences with Father la Combe, *for fear of bad consequences*. The superior of the house, a man of merit, and the prioress, as well as the community, were so irritated at this, that they could not forbear testifying it to himself. He then excused himself with a pretended respect, saying, *I did not mean it that way*. They wrote to him, "that I did not see the Father but at the confessional, and not in conference; that they were so much edified by me, as to think themselves happy in having me, and to esteem it a great favour from God." What they said out of pure charity, was not pleasing to the Bishop, who, seeing they loved me in this house, said, *that I won over every body to myself, and that he wished I were out of the diocese*. Though I knew all this, and these good sisters were troubled at it, I could have no trouble, by reason of the ~~calm establishment~~ which I was in, the will of God render-

ing every thing equal to me ; the creatures, however unreasonable or passionate they appear, not being regarded in themselves but in God ; for an habitual faith causes every thing to be seen in God without distinction. Thus when I see poor souls so ruffled for discourses in the air, so uneasy for explanations, I pity them for their want of light. They have reasons, I know, which *self-love* causes to appear very just.

To relieve myself a little from the fatigue of continual conversation, as my body grew weak, I desired Father la Combe to allow me a retreat, and to give out that he had ordered me to make one. He told the people so ; but they could hardly leave me in repose. It was then that I let myself be consumed by love all the day long. Then also I perceived the quality of a spiritual mother ; for God gave me what I cannot express for the perfection of souls. This I could not hide from Father la Combe. It seemed to me as if I entered into the inmost recesses of his heart. Our Lord shewed me he was his servant, chosen amongst a thousand, singularly to honour him ; but that he would lead him through total death, and the entire destruction of *the old man* ; that he would have me contribute thereto, and be instrumental to cause him to walk in the way in which he had led me first ; in order that I might be in a condition to direct others therein, and to tell them the tracks through which I have passed ; that God would have us to be conformed, and to become both one in him ; that though my soul was more advanced now, yet he should one day pass beyond it, with a bold and rapid flight. God knows how I rejoiced herein, and with what joy I would see my spiritual children surpass me in glory.

In this retreat I felt a strong propensity to write, but resisted it till I fell sick. I had nothing to write about, not one idea to begin with. It was a divine impulse, with such a fulness of grace as was hard to contain, or bear. I

opened this disposition of mind to Father la Combe. He answered me, "that he had a strong impulse to command me to write, but had not dared to do it yet, on account of my weakness." I told him, "that weakness was the effect of my resistance, and I believed it would, through my writing, go off again:" he asked me, "but what is it you will write?" I replied, "I know nothing of it, nor desire to know, leaving it entirely to God to direct me." He ordered me to do so. At my taking the pen I knew not the first word I should write; but when I began, suitable matter flowed copiously, nay impetuously; and as I was writing, I was relieved and grew better. I wrote an entire treatise on the interior path of Faith, under the comparison of torrents, or of streams and rivers;\* and though it is pretty long, the comparison in it holds out to the end.

As the way wherein God now conducted Father la Combe, was very different from that in which he had formerly walked; which had been all light, knowledge, ardour, assurance, sentiments; but now the poor, low, despised path of faith, and of nakedness; he found it very hard to submit thereto, which caused me no little suffering. Who could express what it has cost my heart before he was formed according to the will of God? The more this soul is precious in the eyes of God, the more dearly have I been obliged to pay for it. Mean time the possession which God had of my soul became every day stronger, insomuch that I passed whole days without being able to pronounce one word; for God was pleased to make me pass wholly into him by an entire internal transformation.† He became more and more the absolute master of my heart, to such a degree as not to leave me a movement of my own, in order

\* This Treatise was written by her in 1683, entitled *The Torrents*. It has been twice printed in Holland, among her spiritual works, in the first volume, in 1704, and more correctly in the second Volume in 1712.

† John xvii. 21, 23. 1 Cor. vi. 17.



that I might be continually supple to every intimation of his will. This state did not hinder me from condescending to my sister, and the others in the house. Nevertheless, the useless things with which they were taken up, could not suit my state. That was what induced me to ask leave to make a retreat, to let myself be possessed of him who holds me so closely united to himself, after an ineffable manner. At this time he purified me from a relick of nature very subtle and delicate, so that my soul was brought into very great purity. All partitions were utterly consumed. Then it was given me to write in a manner purely divine. All that I had wrote before the time of my probation was condemned to the fire. Our Lord united me more closely in his spirit with Father la Combe. He required me to tell him my thoughts, to the very least of them, or to write them to him, as he was often absent. It was a thing which I had never done before, when I might have done it more commodiously. I said with the spouse, (Cant. v. 3.) "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Must my spirit, which is so naked and empty, again be furnished and filled? And after having been subject to God only, must I become so to the creature? I could have wished to avoid it, had I been mistress of myself; but I was taken up with the thought till I had obeyed. Far from having its former purity, the heart became sullied by such thoughts, even though they were of good things: for to trouble the water with a stick of wood, or staff of gold, it still muddies it alike. I found that the stronger the union grew between us, the more we were united to God, and drawn off from human sentiments. I was the more constrained to forgive him nothing which was amiss, to desire the thorough destruction thereof, that God only might reign; and was obliged to tell him faithfully, whatever the Lord made known to me that he required of him:—and this was a hard place to pass. I was con-

strained to tell him the essential defects of the sister who took care of my daughter: as he was prepossessed in her favour, from her gifts and graces which she had told him of, he rejected with displeasure what I said about her: but the Lord allowed me not to rest till I told him all I thought of her, in regard to her faults. On every occasion I was forced to suffer for his infidelity. Long has been the martyrdom I have suffered on this account, and beyond whatever can be expressed concerning it.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Remarks on her spiritual state. Miraculous cure, and observations thereon. Singular account of a nun. She falls dangerously ill.*

OUR blessed Lord had fully determined that I should enter into, and experience all his states, beginning with the first, and going on even to the last. Reducing me even to a perfect child-like simplicity, he gave me such a wonderful obedience to my director Father la Combe, that into whatever extremity of bodily illness I was plunged, I was immediately cured at his command. I seemed to be a representative of Jesus Christ in his childhood, obedient to his Father's will. Also a sign and testimony to this good father, who having been hitherto conducted by *testimonies*,\* could not get out of that way. In all that was said to him, and all that God caused him to experience, he was ever seeking for some *testimonies*, reasons, or demonstrations. It was the point wherein he had the most pain to die to himself, and by which he has caused me to suffer so much. Our Lord, to make him enter the more readily into what he required both of him and me, gave him the greatest of all testimonies, which was this wonderful obedience; in order to

\*That is to say, sensible marks, perceptible proofs, and evident reasons.

make him see that it did not depend upon me, but that God gave it me for him; when he grew strong enough to bear the loss of every testimony, and God would have him learn to walk without such helps, this obedience was taken from me in such sort, that without an immediate attention thereto, I could no longer obey him. This was ordered to make him enter the more into death to himself, and to deprive him of the support of this testimony; for now all my efforts to revive it were useless. I was obliged to follow the internal dictates of my Sovereign. He gave me this repugnance to obey my external director; but it continued no longer than was necessary to make him lose the support he had drawn from thence, and perhaps I myself also.

I had at that time so ardent a desire for his perfection, and to see him thoroughly die to himself, that I could have wished him all the crosses and afflictions imaginable, (far from pitying him in them,) that might conduce to this great and blessed end. Whenever he was unfaithful, or looked at things in any other light than the true one, viz. to tend to this mystic death, I felt myself on the rack, which, as I had till then been so indifferent, very much surprised me. To the Lord I made my complaint, who graciously encouraged me, both on this subject and on that entire dependence on himself which he gave me, which was such that I was like a new born infant.

My sister had brought me a maid,\* whom God was willing to give me, to fashion her according to his will, not without some crucifixion to myself, (for I believe it never is to fall out, that our Lord will give me any persons without giving them wherewith to make me suffer for them) whether it be for the purpose of drawing them into a spiritual life, or never to leave me without the cross. She was one on whom the Lord had conferred very singular graces.

\* One of those young women who was a prisoner in the Bastile at Paris twelve years, when Lady Guion was there.

She was in high reputation in the country, where she passed for a saint. Our Lord brought her to me, to let her see the difference between the sanctity conceived and comprised in those gifts, with which she was endowed, and that which is obtained by our entire destruction, even by the loss of those very gifts, and of all that raised us in the esteem of men. Our Lord had given her the same dependence on me, as I had in regard to Father la Combe, nevertheless with some difference.

This girl fell grievously sick. I was willing to give her all the assistance in my power, but I found I had nothing to do but to command her bodily sickness, or the disposition of her mind; and all that I said was done. It was then that I learned what it was to command by the Word, and to obey by the Word. It was Jesus Christ in me, equally commanding and obeying.

She, however, continued sick for some time. One day, after dinner, I was moved to say to her, "Rise, and be no longer sick." She rose, and was cured. The nuns were very much astonished; and as they knew nothing of what had passed, but saw her walking, who in the morning had appeared to be in the last extremity, they attributed her disorder to vapours.

Thus are miracles operated by the annihilated soul, in such sort that as this soul is now become *nothing*, from hence nothing ought to be attributed to it. It does not say, when it feels an impulse to heal, "be thou healed in the name of Jesus Christ." For that is a power of doing miracles in the name of Christ: but here it is Christ himself who does the miracle, and who says by that person, "Be healed,"—and it is done: or, "Let the devils be gone," and they are gone. When the person says that, it is the divine Word which speaks, and effects what it speaks; the Word which spoke in the beginning, and all things were made. These do not make use of any form of prayers be-

fore it. They say what is given them to say. Jesus prayed publicly at the resurrection of Lazarus: "~~But~~ this," he said, "I do because of the people who stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Other servants of God, favoured with the gift of miracles, pray, and obtain thereby what they desire: but here it is the Word who uses his own authority, and who acts by the person in whom he lives and reigns.

Two things hereupon are to be observed. One is, that the souls of which I speak, do not generally do their miracles by giving any thing, or by simply touching; but it is by the Word, although they sometimes accompany it with a touch. It is the All-powerful Word. The other is, that these miracles require the consent, or at least that there be no opposition, of the party on whom they are to be wrought. Our blessed Lord asked those good people whom he healed, "Are ye willing to be healed?" Could there be any doubt of it when the man came to him for that very purpose? Such is the great secret of the operation of the Word, and of the liberty of man. It is not thus on the dead, or on inanimate creatures. He then speaks, and it is done: but in the other case it requires the consent of the soul.

I have at sundry times experienced, and felt in myself, how much God respects the freedom of man, and even demands his free concurrence; for when I said, "Be healed," or, "Be free from your troubles;" if such persons acquiesced therein, the Word was efficacious, and they were healed. If they doubted, or resisted, though under fair pretexts, as saying, "I shall be healed when it pleases God, I will not be healed till he wills it;" or, in the way of despair, "I cannot be healed; I will not quit my condition," then the word had no effect. I felt in myself, that the divine virtue retired in me. I experienced what our Lord said, when the woman, afflicted with the issue of blood, touched him, and he instantly asked, "Who touched

me?" The apostles said, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee; and sayest thou, who touched me?" But he replied, "Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of me." Jesus Christ had caused that healing virtue to flow, through me, by means of his Word: but when that virtue met not with a correspondence in the subject, I felt its suspence in its source, which gave me some pain. I should be, as it were, displeased with those persons: but when there was no resistance, but a full acquiescence, this divine virtue had its full effect. One cannot conceive the delicacy of this healing virtue. Although it has so much power over things inanimate, yet the least thing in man either restrains it, or stops it entirely.\*

There was a good nun much afflicted, and under a violent temptation. She went to declare her case to a sister whom she thought very spiritual, and in a condition capable of assisting her. But far from finding succour here, she was very much discouraged and cast down. The other despised and repulsed her, treating her with con-

\* The language of infidelity boldly pronounces, *miracles are ceased*: as if either the omnipotence of God, or his benevolence to mankind were ceased. So formerly, when iniquity bore sway, the people said, "The Lord hath forsaken the earth; and the Lord seeth not." Ezek. ix. 9.

Among the first Christians, we find, there were diversities of gifts, but the same spirit, viz. gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 4, 9, 10. I have no doubt at all but if men at this day were sufficiently purified, they would in like manner be eminently dignified. This I must ever believe on behalf of that infinite wisdom and goodness, which *would have all men to be saved from evil, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth.* 1 Tim. ii. 4. The things which this Divine Truth unfolds, are such as *the natural man receiveth not; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

M. Guion had been brought through the deeps, and had passed through the furnace of purification. Who then can be competent judges of her words and works, but such as have followed Christ to the same length and depth? We have no other rule to judge pretenders and their pretensions by, but that which Christ has given, viz. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* Matt. vii. 16.

tempt and rigour, saying, "Don't come near me, since you are that way."\* This poor girl in great distress came to me, thinking herself undone, on account of what the sister had said to her. I consoled her, and our Lord relieved her immediately ; but I could not then forbear telling her, "that assuredly the other would be punished, and would fall into a state worse than hers." The sister who had used her in such a manner came also to me, highly pleased with herself in what she had done, saying, "she abhorred such tempted creatures ; that as for herself, she was proof against such sorts of temptations, and that she never had a bad thought." I said to her, "My sister, from the friendship I have for you, I wish you the pain of her who spoke to you, and even one still more violent." She answered me haughtily, "If you were to ask it from God for me, and I ask of him the contrary, I believe I shall be heard at least as soon as you." I answered her with great firmness, "If it be only my own interests which I ask, I shall not be heard ; but if it be those of God only, and yours too, I shall be heard sooner than you are aware." That very night she fell into so violent a temptation, that one equal to it has seldom been known ; she continued in it a fortnight. It was then she had ample occasion, to acknowledge her own weakness, and what she should be without grace. She conceived at first a violent hatred for me, saying, that I was the cause of her pain. But as it served her, as the clay did to enlighten him who had been born blind, she saw very well what had brought on her so terrible a state.

I fell sick, even to extremity. This sickness proved a means to cover the great mysteries which it pleased God to operate in me. Scarcely ever was a disorder more extraordinary, or of longer continuance in its excess. I was reduced to a state of mere infancy, a state which appeared only to those who were capable of it. As for others, to

\* How rash and unchristian is it to deride temptations.

them mine appeared only a natural, or common case. I was put into a dependence on the Child Jesus, who was willing to communicate to me his own infant state, that I should bear him as such. The more I advanced the more I was freed from this dependence, as children gradually rise above such dependence as they grow up. My fever ran so high as to throw me into a delirium. I had also an imposthume at the corner of my eye, very painful. At this time it broke entirely. They dressed it a long time, and probed it down to the bottom of my cheek. I had so burning a fever, and was so very weak, that it was obliged to be left to close of itself without a cure; for my emaciated body was not able to bear these operations, without being on the very point of expiring. I suffered with great patience, like a child which scarce knows what one does to it. I then experienced the strength of God joined to the weakness of a child. My natural disposition was so remote from such a deportment, that no less than a divine power was sufficient to bring me to it. Nevertheless, I gave myself up to be led thus; for my interior state was so actuated of God, that I could not resist him. His spirit was become the sole master in me; and made me do, or submit to, whatever he pleased; so that during this sickness, my look was infantine, as those about me observed. And yet our Lord gave me, with the weaknesses of a child, a great power over souls. I saw that God made himself be obeyed, in and through me, like an absolute Sovereign. I neither resisted him nor took part in any thing. I inwardly felt a candour of soul, inexpressible, and quite exempt from all guile. With this I was obliged to continue to tell my thoughts, or write them, to Father la Combe, and to help him according to the light which was given me. I was often so weak that I could not lift up my head to take nourishment; and when God required me to write to him, either to help and encourage him, or to lay before him



what was made known to me, I had strength given me to do it. When my letters were finished, I found myself in the same weakness. Our Lord had given us both to understand that he would unite us by faith and by the cross. Ours, then, has been a union of the cross, in every respect, as well by what I have made him suffer, as by what I have suffered for him. Thus it was reciprocal, and much stronger than I am able to express. The sufferings which I have had on his account, were such as reduced me sometimes to extremity, and continued for several years: for though I have been much more of my time far from him, than near him, that did not relieve my suffering, which lasted till he was perfectly emptied of self, and to the very point of submission which God required of him. This operation made him suffer pains so much the more intense, as the designs of God upon him were the greater. He has occasioned me great pains when I was near an hundred leagues from him. I felt his disposition. If he was faithful in letting *self* be destroyed, I was in a state of peace and enlargement; if he was unfaithful, in reflection or hesitation, I suffered till that was passed over. He had no need to write me an account of his state, for I knew it; but when he did write, it proved to be such as I had felt it. My heart had in it, as it were, a counterpart, or an echo, which told it all the dispositions which he was in. In short, to bear a soul, however distant the person may be, in all its different dispositions, and to suffer for all its resistances, is a thing very strange and mysterious.

I was much surprised to comprehend by experience, that what God required of me in thus obliging me to tell my thoughts, was to perfect me in simplicity, to make me readily yield to whatever he manifested to be his will, and to make Father la Combe enter into the same state: for whatever cross it was to me thus to tell him all my thoughts, which often so much disgusted him, as to make him desist

from serving me, as he told me ; yet I never forbore, on this account, to tell him them : and he, through submission to divine grace, at length got over all these repugnances.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

*In her sickness she is favoured with profound views of the future ; and with a spiritual communication in heavenly silence.*

My sister was in no wise capable of comprehending my state. She often took offence at it ; yet was displeased when I concealed it from her ever so little, although it was so strange to her ; the depth and nature of it being such, as many persons more spiritual than she, could not have been able to comprehend ; so that in this sickness I suffered much on all sides. The exercises of pain, though great, were the least. Those on the part of the creature were much greater. My highest consolations were in receiving the sacrament, and sometimes seeing Father la Combe. I had strange interruptions and crosses from my sister, as also from that nun, and from the maid, who wanted to return home. I was obliged (whatever extremity I was in) to hear their differences, which they came to tell me one after another ; and they were each of them angry with me, because I would not enter into their party. They scarce allowed me any sleep ; for as the fever redoubled in the night, I could only get one hour's rest. I wished to sleep a little in the day, but they would not let me, saying, *it was only to avoid speaking to them* ; so that I needed very great patience to bear with them. It continued thus for more than six months. I think that was partly the cause of my delirium which held two days. I still had a noise in my head with a very severe head-ache. Yet I complained of nothing, but suffered cheerfully as a child. Father la

Combe ordered them to allow me a little repose, which they did for some days only, and soon began again.

I cannot express the mercies which God shewed me in the time of this indisposition, and the profound views of the future which he gave me. I saw the devil in great wrath going to excite a violent persecution against prayer, and against the persons drawn into that holy exercise. I wrote an account of all this to Father la Combe; and, if he has not burned the letters, they will still serve as proofs of the truth hereof. The devil durst not attack myself; he feared me too much. I was to him like a thunderbolt. I then comprehended what a power a soul has, which is entirely annihilated. Our Lord then let me see all that has come to pass since that time, as my letters clearly manifest.

As I was thinking in myself what so great a dependence was, and so pure and intimate an union, I saw twice in a dream Jesus Christ, an infant of admirable beauty; and it seemed to me that he very closely united us, saying, "It is I who unite thee to myself, and am willing that we be both one." Another time he bade me see Father la Combe, who then kept himself at some distance from me through infidelity; and, with great goodness he brought him back again, willing to help me in a state of childhood, as I helped him in the state of death. He had a very great charity for me. Treating me as a real child, he often said to me, "When I am with you, I seem to myself as if I was with a child." I was frequently reduced to extremity, and seemed on the point of death. I had, as it were, its agonies. For several hours I only breathed a long time asunder. Then all on a sudden I recovered. Death flattered me; for I had a great fondness for it; but it only appeared flying off. The father forbid me to rejoice at the prospect of death. I immediately discovered that it was an imperfection, and did it no more; remaining afterwards in the utmost indifference about it. There passed so many extraor-

dinary things in this sickness, that it would be impossible for me to relate them. God incessantly wrought miracles to relieve me, and give me new strength when I was at extremity. In my pains they treated me wrong. The remedies they gave me augmented them; but I could not make myself uneasy about it. The sisters had much compassion for me; and all were concerned but myself.

Several times I saw in dreams Father la Mothe raising persecutions against me. Our Lord let me know that this would be the case, and that Father la Combe would forsake me in the time of persecution. This I wrote to him, and it disquieted him greatly; because he thought his heart was united to the will of God, and too desirous of serving me, to admit such desertion: and yet it has since been found quite true; though not with his will, but from necessity, having been himself persecuted the first. He was now to preach during Lent, and was so much followed, that people came five leagues, to pass several days there for the benefit of his ministry. I heard he was so sick that he was thought like to die, and prayed to the Lord to restore his health, and enable him to preach to the people, who were longing to hear him. My prayer was heard, and he soon recovered, and resumed his pious labours.

During my extraordinary sickness, the Lord gradually taught me that there was another manner of conversing among souls wholly his, than by speech. Thou madest me conceive, oh divine Word, that as thou art ever speaking and operating in a soul, though therein thou appearest in profound silence; so there was also a way of communication in thy creatures, in an ineffable silence. I learned then a language which before had been unknown to me. I gradually perceived, when Father la Combe entered, that I could speak no more; and that there was formed in my soul the same kind of silence towards him, as was formed in it, in regard to God. I comprehended that God

was willing to shew me that men might in this life learn the language of angels. I was gradually reduced to speak to him only in silence. It was then that we understood each other in God, after a manner unutterable and all divine. Our hearts spoke to each other, communicating a grace which no words can express. It was like a new country, both for him and for me, but so divine, that I cannot describe it. At first this was done in a manner so perceptible, *that is to say*, God penetrated us with himself in a manner so pure and so sweet, that we passed hours in this profound silence, always communicative, without being able to utter one word. It was in this that we learned, by our own experience, the operations of the heavenly Word to reduce souls into unity with itself, and what purity one may arrive at in this life. It was given me to communicate this way to other good souls, but with this difference, that I did nothing but communicate to them the grace with which they were filled, while near me, in this sacred silence, which infused into them an extraordinary strength and grace; but I received nothing from them: whereas with Father la Combe, there was a flow and return of communication of grace, which he received from me, and I from him, in the greatest purity.

It was in this that I comprehended the ineffable commerce of the most holy Trinity to all the blessed; and how God, who communicates himself to them, forms in them a flux and reflux of his own divine communications; that the saints of the like degree or hierarchy return to each other these pure and blissful emanations, and further shed them on the inferior hierarchies, and that all are reduced into their first principle, from whence they flow. I saw that we were created to partake in this life the unspeakable happiness of the commerce of the celestial regions, and that it requires us to be very pure to receive God thus uninterruptedly, and to leave him to flow back into himself in that

same purity. We must indeed be very pure to receive and to communicate the divine Word, and afterwards to diffuse it by a flux and reflux of communication upon the other souls which God gives us. This is what fixes us in the divine unity, in which we are one in him from whom all is derived.

I saw then this hierarchic order, and these reciprocal communications, among the saints and angels of the same rank; and how this efflux spreads over those of inferior orders, and that with such a plenitude, that they are all filled according to their degree. It is to render the soul capable of these communications, that it needs to be so thoroughly and radically purified; without which it would ever remain selfish, it would always save something alive: and from thence retard and wholly exclude them. Beside, its capacity needs to be extended, which being extremely contracted and bounded by sin, is not in a state, but by the force of fire, and the strokes of the hammer, to be capable of the eternal designs of God in its creation.

It was shewn to me how this hierarchic order was even in this life, and that there are souls who communicate to an infinite number of other souls, without knowing it, to whom the grace of their perfection reaches; that this hierarchy will be preserved through all eternity, and that those who naturally communicate to each other will be in the like degree. It was then that I learned the secret of spiritual fruitfulness and maternity; how the Holy Spirit renders souls fruitful in himself, and that there would be given to me in this way a numberless offspring as well known as unknown. All those who are my true children are drawn in their minds at once to continue in silence when with me; and I have the like tendency to impart to them in silence what God gives me for them. In this silence I discover their wants and failings, and communicate to them in an abundant plenitude according to their necessities. When once

they have tasted of this manner of communication, any other becomes burthensome to them. As for me, when I make use of speech or the pen with souls, I do it only on account of their weakness, and because either they are not pure enough for the interior communication : or because it is yet needful to use condescension, or for the regulation of outward affairs.

Our Lord gave me to experience the same communion with the saints in heaven, as with those on earth : this is the way to be truly united to the saints in God. I felt these communications very inward and very powerful, especially to those with whom one has most of the relation of grace, and to whom one is to be most united in heaven.— At first this was more sensible, because our Lord was graciously pleased to instruct me by my experience. It is the way which he has always used toward me. He has enlightened me, not by illustrations, and conclusions resulting from them ; but in making me experience the things themselves, he gave me the illumination thereon, and thus a clear sight and sense of what I had experienced. I comprehended also the maternity of the Holy Virgin, and after what manner we partake of it ; and how the word of Jesus Christ is found very signally realized, when he says, (Matt. xii. 50.) “ Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

It was in this ineffable silence, that I comprehended the manner in which Jesus Christ communicated himself to his most familiar friends ; and the communication of St. John, when leaning on his Lord's bosom at the supper of the pass-over. It was not the first time that he had seated himself that way : and it was because he was most proper to receive these communications, being the disciple of love. It was in that great banquet that Jesus Christ, as the Word, flowed into John, and discovered to him his profound mys-

teries, even how the eternal Word operates. For the speech of this Word in silence is the most noble and sublime of all operations. It was by this that he learned the difference between "being born of the flesh, or of the will of man, and being born of God." The operations of the flesh are those of carnal men; those of the will of man are such as are virtuous, being done from the good disposition of the man: but those which I am speaking of are of the will of God, wherein man has no share, except the submission or consent which he gives thereto; which was the case of Mary, who said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word."

It is for this that Jesus Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life*; that he comes to *enlighten every man that cometh into the world*: he came to his own; and to as many as received him he gave power to become the sons of God: and to such only is he known in his most intimate communications.

It was this wonderful mystery which operated at the foot of the cross, when he said to his mother, "Behold thy son;" and to St. John, "Behold thy mother." (John xix. 26, 27.)

Oh what admirable communications were those which passed between Mary and St. John! A communication all divine; which the Lord is willing to extend down to me, all unworthy as I am thereof, and to communicate a mother's fruitfulness, affection and tenderness, even to this poor nothing! I mean the fruitfulness of hearts and spirits.

Our Lord was willing, in order to instruct me to the bottom of this mystery, in favour of others, that the girl (she whom I have spoken of,) should have need of this succour. I proved her every way; and when I was not willing that she should stay with me in silence, I saw her inward condition affected by it, and even her bodily strength fail. When I had made a sufficient number of trials hereof, to compre-



hend these manners of communications, her extreme necessities passed away. I began to discover, especially with Father la Combe, that the interior communication was carried on, even when he was afar off, as well as when he was near. Sometimes our Lord made me stop short, when in the midst of my occupations ; and I was favoured with such a flow of grace as that which I felt when with him ; which I have also experienced with many others, though not in a like degree ; but more or less feeling their infidelities, and knowing their faults by inconceivable impressions, without ever having been mistaken therein.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

*Her state represented to her under the figure of the woman in the Revelations. An hospital established by her and Father la Combe at Gex, for poor people who were sick. Her journey to Lausanne.*

IN this long malady, the love of God, and of him alone, made up my whole occupation ; I seemed so entirely lost in him, as to have no sight of myself at all. It seemed as if my heart never came out of that divine ocean, having been drawn into it through deep humiliations. Oh loss, which is the consummation of happiness, though operated through crosses and through deaths!

Jesus, as an infant, was then all living in me ; and I lived no more. I was then taught, oh my Lord, that thy state of infancy should not be the only one which I must bear.— These words were imprinted in me, as a real state into which I must enter, (Matt. viii. 20.) “ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” This I have since experienced in all its extent, having no sure abode, no refuge among my friends, who were ashamed of me, and openly renounced me, when universally decried ; nor among

my relations, most of whom declared themselves my adversaries, and were my greatest persecutors ; while others looked on me with contempt and indignation. My state began to be like that of Job. I might say with David, " For thy sake I have borne reproach ; shame hath covered my face ; I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children : a reproach to men, and despised of the people."

One night when I was awake, Christ showed me to myself, under the figure of the woman in the Revelations, (Rev. xii.) for as the brazen serpent represented Christ, though not really himself, so this figure shadowed out my state. The moon was under her feet, a crown of thorns upon her head, and surrounded with the sun, being with child, cried in the pangs of child-birth. He showed hereby, that my soul was above the vicissitudes and inconstancy of events ; that I was covered and penetrated with the Sun of righteousness ; that the twelve stars were the fruits of this state, and the gifts of God, as a crown on my head ; that I was big with a fruit, which was the spirit which God would have me communicate to all my children ; that the devil was the frightful dragon who would strive to devour that fruit, and to make horrible ravages over all the earth round about me ; but that God would preserve this fruit, that it should not be lost ; (so I trust, in spite of the storm, that all I have had to say or write will be preserved,) that the devil, in his rage, at not succeeding in his design against the fruit, would fall the more fiercely on myself, and would raise a flood against me to swallow me up ; that this flood would be calumny, which would rush to carry me down with rapidity ; but that the earth would open itself to receive this flood ; that is to say, that this calumny would gradually fall to the ground, and there die away.

He showed me all the world in a rage against me, without any one daring to appear for me ; and assured me

in the ineffable silence of his eternal Word, that he would give me vast numbers of children, which I should bring forth by the cross. I left it to him to do with me whatever he pleased, esteeming my whole and sole interest to be placed, entirely in his divine will. He gave me to see how the devil was going to stir up an outrageous persecution against prayer, that it should prove the source of the same prayer, or rather the means which God would make use of to establish it. He gave me to see farther, how he would guide me into the wilderness, where he would cause me to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The wings which were to bear me thither, were the resignation of my whole self to his holy will, and the love of the same will. I think I am at present in that wilderness, separated from the whole world in my imprisonment: and I see already accomplished in part what was then shown me. Can I ever express the mercies which my God has bestowed on me? No; they must ever remain in himself, being of a nature not to be described, by reason of their purity, and immensity.

In my sickness I was often in all appearance at the point of death. Father la Combe administered the sacrament to me, the Prioress of the Ursulines having desired him to do it as their priest was then not at home. I was well satisfied to die, as was he also in the expectation of my departure. For being united in God after a manner so pure, and so spiritual, death could not separate us, but on the contrary would have more closely united us. Father la Combe, who was on his knees at my bed-side, remarking the change of my countenance, and how my eyes faded, seemed ready to give me up for dying; when God inspired him to lift up his hands, and with a strong voice, which was heard of those who were in my chamber, at that time almost full, to command death to relinquish. Instantly it seemed to be stopped: and thus God was pleased wonderfully to raise

me up again ; yet for a long time I continued extremely weak, during all which our Lord still gave me new testimonies of his love. How many times was he pleased to make use of his servant to restore me to life, when I was almost on the very point of expiring ! As they saw that my sicknesses and pains did not end, they judged that the air of the lake on which the convent was situated, was very prejudicial to my constitution. They concluded that it would be necessary for me to remove.

During my sad indisposition, our Lord put it into the heart of Father la Combe, to establish an hospital in this place for the poor people seized with maladies, and to institute also a committee, or congregation of ladies of the charity, to furnish such as could not leave their families, to go to the hospital, with the means of subsistence during their illness, after the manner of France ; there not having been yet any institution of this kind in that country. Willingly did I enter into it ; and without any other fund than Providence, and some useless chambers which the gentlemen of the town gave us, we began it. We dedicated it to the holy child Jesus, and he was pleased to give the first beds to it from the earnest-pence of my pension, which belonged to him. He gave such a blessing thereto, that several other persons joined us in this charity. In a short time there were near twelve beds in it, and three persons of great piety gave themselves to this hospital to serve it, who, without any salary, consecrated themselves to the service of the poor patients. I supplied them with ointments and medicines, which were freely given to such of the poor people of the town as had need of them. These good ladies were so hearty in the cause, that, through their charity, and the care of the young women, this hospital was very well maintained and served. These ladies joined together also in providing for the sick, who could not go to the hospital : and I gave them some little regulations, such as I had observed

when in France, which they continued to keep up with tenderness and love.

All these little things, which cost but little, and which owed all their success to the blessing which God gave them, drew upon us new persecutions. The Bishop of Geneva was offended with me more than ever, especially in seeing that these small matters rendered me beloved. He said, "I won over every body." He openly declared, "that he could not bear me in his diocese," though I had done therein nothing but good, or rather God by me. He extended the persecution to those good *religious women* who had been my assistants. The Prioress, in particular, had her own share to bear, though it did not last long : for as I was obliged, on account of the air, to remove, after having been there about two years and a half, they were then more in peace and quietness. On another side, my sister was very weary of this house : and as the season for the waters approached, they took occasion from thence to send her away, with the maid which I brought with me, who had molested me exceedingly in my late illness. I only kept her whom Providence had sent me by means of my sister : and I have ever thought that God had ordered my sister's journey hither, only to bring her to me, as one chosen of him and proper for the state which it was his pleasure to cause me to bear.

While I was yet, (indisposed,) with the Ursulines, the Bishop of Vercueil, earnestly requested the Father-General of the Bernabites, to seek among the religious, a man of merit, piety and learning, in whom he might place a confidence, and who might serve him for a prebend and a counsellor. At first he cast his eyes on Father la Combe ; yet before he absolutely engaged him with the said Bishop, he wrote to him, to know, "whether he had any objection thereto." Father la Combe replied, "that he had no other will but that of obeying him, and that he might command

him herein as he should think best in the case." He gave me an account of this, and that we were going to be entirely separated. I was glad to find that our Lord would employ him under a Bishop who knew him, and would be likely to do him justice. Yet it was some time before he went, matters not being all fixed.

Before my coming away from the Ursulines, the good hermit I have spoken of, wrote to me, earnestly entreating me to go to Lausanne\*, which was only six leagues from Tonon, over the lake, because he still hoped to draw back his sister who lived there, in order to labour for her conversion. One cannot go thither to speak about religion without running some risque. As soon as I was in a condition to walk, though but feebly, I resolved to go thither. We took a boat, and I requested Father la Combe to accompany us. We got over pretty easily : but as the lake was above a quarter of a league distant from the town, I was obliged, notwithstanding my weakness, to muster up all my forces to get thither on foot, as we could not find any other means of conveyance. The boatmen bore me up as well as they could, but not sufficiently for the condition I was in. When I arrived at the town I was extremely reduced. Both Father la Combe and myself spoke to that woman, but she was newly married, and declared that, if it were not in regard to her brother, from whom we delivered letters to her, she would have informed against us, as being come to debauch the Protestants. In our return we had like to have perished on the lake, in a dangerous place, where there came a tempest against us, which seemed to be going to swallow us up ; if God had not protected us. Some days after, a bark foundered there, with thirty-three persons in it.

\* Lausanne, a city of Switzerland, in the canton of Bern, situate on the north side of the lake of Geneva.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Her departure from the Ursulines at Tonon. She lives next in a wretched poor place, where she is grievously persecuted. The Marchioness of Prunai invites her to Turin, whither she goes attended by Father la Combe. She receives invitations from the Bishops of Aouste and Verceil.*

I THEN went off from the Ursulines, and they sought for a house for me at a distance from the lake. There was but one to be found empty, which had the look of the greatest poverty. It had no chimney but in the kitchen, through which one was obliged to pass to go to the chamber. I took my daughter with me, and gave up the largest chamber for her, and the maid who was to take care of her. I was lodged in a little hole, on straw, to which I went up by a ladder. As we had no other furniture than our beds, which were quite plain and homely, I bought some straw chairs and bosses, with Dutch earthen, and wooden ware. Never did I enjoy a greater content than in this little hovel, which appeared so very conformable to the state of littleness of Jesus Christ: I fancied every thing better on wood than on plate. I laid in all my provisions, hoping to stay there a long time, but the devil did not leave me long in such sweet peace. It would be difficult for me to tell the persecutions which were stirred up against me. They threw stones in at my windows, which fell at my feet. I had got my little garden put in order. They came in the night, tore it all up, broke down the arbour, and overturned every thing in it, as if it had been ravaged by soldiers.— They came to abuse me at the door all night long, making such a noise as if they were going to break it open. These persons have since told who put them on such work.— Though from time to time I continued my charities at Gex, I was not the less persecuted for it. They offered one per-

son a warrant\* to compel Father la Combe to stay at Tonon, thinking he would otherwise be a support to me in the persecution, but we prevented it. I knew not then the designs of God, and that he would soon draw me from that poor solitary place, in which I had enjoyed a sweet and solid satisfaction, notwithstanding the abuses from without. I thought myself happier here than any sovereign on earth.— It was for me like a *nest* and a *place of repose*; and Christ was willing that I should be like him. The devil, as I have said, irritated my persecutors. They sent to desire me to go out of the diocese. All the good which the Lord had caused me to do in it was condemned, more than the greatest crimes. Those crimes they tolerated, but me they could not endure. All this while I never had any uneasiness or repentance for my having left all, not that I was assured of having done the will of God therein: such an assurance would have been too much for me. But I could neither see nor regard any thing, receiving any thing alike from the hand of my God, who directed and disposed these crosses for me either in justice or in mercy.

The Marchioness of Prunai, sister of the chief secretary of state to his Royal Highness (the Duke of Savoy) and his prime minister, had sent an express from Turin, in the time of my illness, to invite me to come to reside with her; and to let me know, that, “being so persecuted as I was in this diocese, I should find an asylum with her; that during that time things might grow better; that when they should be well disposed, she would return with me, and join me with a friend of mine from Paris, who was willing also to come to labour there, according to the will of God.” I was not at that time in a condition to execute what she desired of me, and expected to continue with the Ursulines till things should change. She then wrote to me about it no more.

\* Lettre de Cachet.



This lady is one of extraordinary piety, who had quitted the splendour and noise of the court for the more silent satisfaction of a retired life, and to give herself up to God.— With an eminent share of natural advantages, she has continued a widow twenty-two years ; and has refused every offer of marriage, to consecrate herself to our Lord entirely, and without any reserve. When she knew that I had been obliged to leave the Ursulines, yet without knowing any thing of the manner in which I had been treated, she procured a letter to oblige Father la Combe to go to pass some weeks at Turin, for her own benefit, and to bring me with him thither, where I should find a refuge. All this she did unknown to us ; and, as she has told us since, a superior force moved her to do it, without knowing the cause thereof. If she had deliberately reflected on it, being such a prudent lady, she probably would not have done it : for the persecutions, which the Bishop of Geneva procured us in that place, cost her more than a little of humiliations. Our Lord permitted him to pursue me, after a surprising manner, into all the places I have been in, without giving me any relaxation, though I never did him any harm ; but on the contrary would have lain down my life for the good of his diocese.

As this fell out without any design on our part, we, without any hesitation, believed it was the will of God ; and thought it might be the means of his appointment to draw us out of the reproach and persecution we laboured under, seeing myself chased on the one side, and desired on the other ; it was therefore concluded that Father la Combe should conduct me to Turin, and that he should go from thence to Verceil.

Beside him, I took with me a religious man of merit, who had taught theology for fourteen years past, in order to do things with the more decency, and to take away from our enemies all the subjects of slander. I also took with

me a boy whom I had brought out of France, and who had learned the taylor's trade. They took horses, and I hired a litter for my daughter, my chamber-maid, and myself : but all precautions are useless, when it pleases God to permit them to be frustrated. Our adversaries immediately wrote off to Paris. A hundred ridiculous stories were circulated about this journey ; comedies were acted on it, things invented at pleasure, and as false as any in the world could be. It was Father de la Mothe who was so active in uttering all this stuff. Had he believed it to be true, he ought out of charity to have concealed it ; and much more, being so very false. They said, " I was gone all alone with Father la Combe, strolling about the country, from province to province," with many such fables, as weak and wicked, as they were incoherent, and badly put together. We suffered all with patience, without vindicating ourselves, or making any complaint : and, if things be coolly and impartially considered, could I do any better in the condition I was in ? Was it not both honourable and of real advantage for me to be with a lady of such quality and merit ? Was it not sufficient to cut off the course of malediction ? Do disorderly persons choose houses of that sort ? But passion has no eyes, and calumny is a torrent which drowns all reason.

Scarce were we arrived at Turin, but the Bishop of Geneva wrote against us. As he could pursue us no other way, he did it by his letters. Father la Combe repaired to Verceil, and I staid at Turin, with the Marchioness of Prunai. But what crosses was I assaulted with in my own family, from the Bishop of Geneva, from the Bernabites, and from a vast number of persons besides ! My eldest son came to find me out, on the death of my mother-in-law, which was an augmentation of my troubles ; but after we had heard all his accounts of things, and how they had made sales of all the moveables, chosen guardians, and

settled every article, without consulting me at all, I seemed to be there entirely useless. It was judged not proper for me to return, considering the rigour of the season.

The Marchioness of Prunai, who had been so warmly desirous of my company, seeing my great crosses and reproaches, looked coldly upon me. My child-like simplicity, which was the state wherein at that time God kept me, passed with her for stupidity; but when the question was to help any one, or about any thing which God required of me, he gave me, with the weakness of a child, which appeared in pure candour, the evident tokens of divine strength. Her heart was quite shut up to me all the time I was there. Our Lord, however, made me foretell all that should fall out, and which since that time has actually been fulfilled, as well to herself as to her daughter, and to the virtuous Ecclesiastic, who lived at her house. She did not fail, at last, to conceive more friendship for me, seeing then that Christ was in me. It was the force of self-love, and fear of reproach, which had closed up her heart. Moreover, she thought her state more advanced than in reality it was, by reason of her being without probations; but she soon saw by experience that I had told her the truth. She was obliged for family reasons to leave Turin, and go to live on her own estate. She solicited me to go with her; but the education of my daughter did not permit my compliance.—To stay at Turin without her, seemed improper, because, having lived very retired in this place, I made no acquaintance in it. I knew not which way to turn. The Bishop of Vercell, where Father la Combe was, most obligingly wrote to me, earnestly entreating me to come thither, promising me his protection, and assuring me of his esteem, adding, “that he should look upon me as his own sister; that he wished extremely to have me there.” It was his own sister, a *religious* of the visitation of Turin, one of my particular friends, who had wrote to him about me, as had also a

French gentleman, an acquaintance of his. But a point of honour kept me from it. I would not have it said that I had gone after Father la Combe, and that I had come to Turin, only for the purpose of going to Verceil. He had also his reputation to preserve, which was the cause that he could not agree to my going thither, however importunate the Bishop was for it. Had we believed it to be the will of God, we should both of us have passed over these considerations. God kept us both in so great a dependence on his orders, that he did not let us foreknow them; but the *divine moment* of his Providence determined every thing. This proved of very great service to Father la Combe, who had long walked in assurances, to die to them and to himself; for God, by an effect of his goodness, that he might thus die without any reserve, took them all away from him.

During the whole time of my residence at Turin, our Lord conferred on me very great favours. I found myself every day more transformed into him, and had continually more knowledge of the state of souls, without ever being mistaken or deceived therein, though some were willing to persuade me to think the contrary. I had used my utmost endeavours to give myself other thoughts, which has cost me not a little. For when I told, or wrote to Father la Combe about the state of some souls, which appeared to him more perfect and advanced than the knowledge given to me of them, he attributed it to pride; he was very angry with me, and prejudiced against my state. I had no uneasiness on account of his esteeming me the less, for I was not in a condition to reflect whether he esteemed me or not. He could not reconcile (God so permitting it, to take from him every support,) an obedience to a miracle in most things, with so extraordinary a firmness, which in certain cases he looked on as criminal. He admitted a distrust of my grace; for he was not yet sufficiently confirmed in his way, nor did he duly comprehend, that it did not in any

wise depend on me, to be either one way or the other ; and that if I had any such power, I should have suited myself to what he said, to spare myself the crosses which that caused me ; or at least would have artfully dissembled my real sentiments. But I could do neither. Were all to perish by it, I was in such a manner constrained, that I could not forbear telling him the things, just as our Lord directed me to tell them to him. In this he has given me an inviolable fidelity to the very last. No crosses or pains have ever made me fail a moment therein. These things then, which appeared to him to be the strong prejudice of a conceited opinion, set him at variance against me. And though he did not openly shew it, but on the contrary tried to conceal it from me, yet how far distant soever he were from me, I could not be ignorant of it ; my spirit felt it, and that more or less, as the opposition was stronger or weaker ; and as soon as it abated or ended, my pain, occasioned thereby, ceased. He also on his side, experienced the like. He has told me and wrote to me many times over, " When I stand well with God, I find I am well with you : when I am otherwise with him, I then find myself to be so with you too." Thus he saw clearly that when God received him into his bosom, it was always in uniting him to me, as if he would accept of nothing from him but in this union.

While he was at Turin, a widow, who was a good servant of God, all in the brightness of sensibility, came to him to confess. She uttered wonderful things of her state. I was then at the other side of the confessional. He told me, " He had met with a soul given up to God, that it was she who was present, that he was very much edified by her ; that he was far from finding the like in me ; that I operated nothing but death upon his soul." At first I rejoiced at his having met with such a holy soul, as it ever gives me the highest joy to see my God glorified. As I was returning, the Lord shewed me clearly the state of that soul, as only

a beginning of devotion mixt with affection and a little silence, filled with a new sensation. This and more, as it was set before me, I was obliged to write to him upon it. On his first reading of my letter he discovered the stamp of truth in it ; but soon after, letting in again his old reflections, he viewed all I wrote in the light of pride ; for he still had in his mind the ordinary rules of humility, conceived and comprised after our manner. As to me, I let myself be led as a child, who says and does, without distinction, whatever it is made to say and do. I left myself to be led wheresoever my heavenly Father pleased, high or low ; all was alike good to me.

He wrote to me, that, at his first reading of my letter, there appeared in it something of truth, but that on reading it over again, he found it to be full of pride, and of a preference of my own discernment to that of others. Sometime after, he was more enlightened hereupon, and, in regard to the state I was in. He then said to me, "Continue to believe as you have done.; I encourage and exhort you to do it." Upon which I began to respire, to recover new life, and an enlargement of soul. "Let nobody (said I to myself as I was returning) speak to me any more of humility. The ideas which people generally have of virtues are not for me. There is nothing else for me but that one thing, viz. ever singly to obey my God." Some time after, he sufficiently discovered, by that person's manner of acting, that she was very far from what he had thought of her. I give this only as one instance. I might give many others nearly like it ; but this may suffice.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*She is endued with the gift of discerning of spirits, clear of any outward information. The deceit of the bishop of Geneva laid open.— A remarkable dream of M. Guion. The excellence and purity of the state, into which the Lord had brought her soul, reviewed and recited.*

ONE night in a dream, our Lord shewed me that he would also purify the maid whom he had given me, and make her truly enter into death to herself. I then freely resolved to suffer for her, as I did for Father la Combe. As she resisted God much more than he, and was much more under the power of self-love, she had more to be purified from. For this maid I have borne much, during three whole years. Our Lord caused me incessantly to do miracles on her account. It seemed as if he gave me an absolute power over both her body and soul. How much soever she was indisposed, as soon as I said to her, "Be healed," she was so: and for her pain, I bore the most of it. It seems as if our Lord had given me some share of experience for her, of what he himself had suffered for men. Surely a small part thereof would have consumed ten thousand worlds. He shewed me, in a dream, her resistances, under the figure of sundry animals, coming out of her body, whose outsides appeared pure, bright and transparent as glass, but all unclean within. Hereby I knew that she had passed through the first purification, or cleansing of the outside, for which reason she had passed in the world for a saint, but far from being inwardly purified. While on that account I suffered, I saw those animals destroy one another, till there remained only one, which devoured all the rest; yet itself appeared to have all the iniquity of the others in it. What I could not tolerate in her was her regard for *herself*. I saw clearly that the devil cannot hurt us, but so far as we retain some fondness for this corrupt *self*.

This sight was from God, who gave me the discerning of spirits, which would ever accept what was from him, or reject what was not; and that not from any common methods of judging, not from any outward information, but by an inward principle which is the gift alone.

That this point be not mistaken, it is needful to mention here, that souls which are yet *in themselves*, whatever degree of light and ardour they have attained, are unqualified for it. They often think they have this discernment, when it is nothing else but sympathy or antipathy of nature. Our Lord had destroyed in me every sort of natural antipathy. The soul must be very pure, and depending on God alone, that all these things may be experienced in him. In proportion as this maid became inwardly purified, my pain abated, till the Lord let me know her state was going to be changed, which soon happily ensued. In comparison of inward pains for souls, outward persecutions, though ever so violent, scarce gave me any.

The Bishop of Geneva wrote to different kinds of persons: he wrote in my favour to such as he thought would shew me his letters, and quite the contrary in the letters which he thought I should never see. It was so ordered that these persons, having shewed each other their letters received from him, were struck with indignation to see in him so shameful a duplicity. They sent me those letters that I might take proper precautions. I kept them two years, and then burnt them, not to hurt the prelate by them. The strongest battery he raised against me was what he did with the secretary of state, who held that post in conjunction with the Marchioness of Prunai's brother. He used all imaginable endeavours to render me odious, and to cry me down. He employed certain Abbots for that purpose, insomuch that, though I appeared very little abroad, I was well known by the descriptions this Bishop had given of me. This did not make so much impression as it



would have done, if he had appeared in a better light at court : some letters of his, which her royal highness found, after the Prince's death, which he had wrote to him against her, had that effect on the Princess, that (instead of taking any notice of what he now wrote against me) she shewed me great respect, and sent her request to me to come to see her. Accordingly I waited on her. She assured me of her protection, and that she was glad of my being in her dominions.

Our Lord discovered to me in a dream,\* that he called me, in order that I should *help my neighbour*. Of all the mysterious dreams I have had, there never was any which made more impression on me than this, and whose unction of grace continued longer. It seemed to me that, being with one of my intimates, we went up a steep mountain, at the foot of which was a stormy sea, full of dangerous shoals, which one must have crossed before coming to this mountain, which was all covered with cypresses. When we had got up to the top of it, we there found another mountain inclosed with fragrant hedges all round, having a gate for entrance, which was locked. We knocked at it, but my companion descended back again, or stayed at the gate; for she entered not with me. The master came and opened the gate to me, and immediately closed it again. Taking me by the hand he led me into the wood, which was of cedars. This mountain was called Lebanon. In this wood there was a lodge, and in it two beds. Hither he brought me. I asked him, "For whom are these?" He answered me, "One for my mother, and the other for thee, my spouse." In this chamber were animals naturally wild, and enemies to one another, all changed in their natures, all living together in a delightful and admirable concord; the cat and the bird, the wolf and the lamb, all sporting together; all respectfully and joyfully saluted me.

\*In the year 1684.

I remembered hereupon the prophecy of Isaiah, xi. 6, and the chamber mentioned in the Canticles, iii. 4. This place breathed nothing but candour and innocence. I perceived in it a boy of about twelve years of age. The Spouse desired him to see if there were any that had escaped from the shipwreck. His service was only to go to the foot of the mountain, to try if he could spy any one. The Spouse turning to me, said, "I have chosen thee, my spouse, to bring hither with thee all the persons who shall have courage and resolution enough to embark on this sea, and to suffer shipwreck there." The boy returned and told him, "that he did not yet see any one escaped from the shipwreck." Thereupon I awaked, much affected with this dream. The sweet impression it left on my spirit continued many days.

My interior state grew still more firm, and my heart so pure that not any imagination entered it, but such as it pleased the Lord to raise. Mine was such a state as is beyond all the power of expression to describe, every motion of the creature so entirely lost, that though outwardly it be free, inwardly it is not, even for the least thing in the world; all its movements and actions being now in God, and under the dominion of his will, in entire union with him, the soul living in and of God, as the body lives in and of the air it breathes. This state is known of God only. Such souls are, as to their exterior, only common, though precious in the sight of God. Though they are the objects of his delight, they are often the butt of the rage and scorn of the world.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Conversion of several Ecclesiastics. Singular dream. Her departure from Turin for Paris, by Grenoble, where she is visited by many, all whose inward states she discerns. The apostolic state described ; its nature and effects.*

It pleased God here to make use of me, to the conversion of two or three ecclesiastics. But I had much to suffer from their repugnances and many infidelities—one of whom had villified me greatly—and even after his conversion turned aside into his old ways ; but God at length graciously restored him.

Before his last return, I saw (in a dream) a great number of very beautiful birds, which every one was pursuing with great emulation and eagerness to catch. I beheld them all without taking part therein, and without wishing to catch any of them. I was not a little surprised, to see that they all came to offer themselves to me, without my using any effort to take them. Among them there was one of an extraordinary beauty, which far surpassed all the others. Every body was eager to get this : but it escaped them all, and me too as well as the rest ; but afterwards it returned to offer itself to me, when I no longer expected it. There was one of the others, which after having come in the like manner, fluttered for a long time, one while offering itself, another while retiring, but at length gave itself up entirely. This last appeared to me to be the religious man I have been just speaking of. Others fled quite away.—But the beautiful bird, which had not any rival,\* is not unknown to me, though he has not come yet. Be it either before, or after my death, I am assured the time will come when he will wholly give himself up to God.

As I was with the Marchioness of Prunai, undetermined

\* Perhaps Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray.

whether I should place my daughter at the Visitation of Turin, to go thither with her, or take some other course ; I was exceedingly surprised, at a time I least expected it, to see Father la Combe arrive from Verceil, and tell me, " I must return to Paris without any delay." It was in the evening, and he said, " I must set off next morning." I confess this sudden news startled me. It was for me a double sacrifice, to return to a place where they had cried me down so much ; and towards a family which held me in contempt, and who had represented my journey (caused by pure necessity) as a voluntary course, pursued through human attachments. Behold me then disposed to go off, without offering a single word in reply, with my daughter and my chambermaid, without any body to guide and attend us ; for Father la Combe was resolved not to accompany me, not so much as in passing the mountains ; because the Bishop of Geneva had wrote on all sides that I was gone to Turin, to run after him : but the Father Provincial, who was a man of quality, and well acquainted with the virtue of Father la Combe, told him, " that it was improper and unsafe to venture on these mountains, without some persons of my acquaintance ; and the more as I had my little daughter with me ; and that he therefore ordered him to accompany me." Father la Combe confessed to me that he had some reluctance to do it, and that only obedience, and the danger to which I should have been exposed, made him surmount it. He was only to accompany me to Grenoble, and from thence to return to Turin. I went off then, designing for Paris, there to suffer whatever crosses and trials it should please God to inflict.

What made me pass by Grenoble, was, the desire I had to spend two or three days with a lady, an eminent servant of God, and one of my friends. When I was there, Father la Combe and that lady spoke to me not to go any farther ; that God would glorify himself in me and by me in that

place. He returned to Verceil, and I left myself to be conducted as a child by Providence. This lady took me to the house of a good widow, there not being accommodations at the inn ; and as I was ordered to stop at Grenoble, at her house I resided. I placed my daughter in a convent, and resolved to employ all this time in resigning myself to be possessed in solitude by Him who is the absolute Sovereign of my soul. I made not any visit in this place ; as it had been my general custom not to make them in other places where I had sojourned. But I was greatly surprised when, a few days after my arrival, there came to see me several persons who made profession of a singular devotion to God. I perceived immediately a gift which he had given me, both of discerning spirits and of administering to each that which suited their states. I felt myself suddenly invested with the apostolic state, and discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me, and that with so much facility, that they were surprised at it, and said one to another, " that I gave every one of them the very thing they had stood in need of." It was thou, oh, my God, who didst all these things ; some of them sent others to me. It came to such an excess, that, generally from six in the morning till eight in the evening, I was taken up in speaking of God. People flocked on all sides, far and near, friars, priests, men of the world, maids, wives, widows, all came one after another ; and God supplied me with what was pertinent and satisfactory to them all, after a wonderful manner, without any share of my study or meditation therein. Nothing was hid from me of their interior state, and of what passed within them. Here, oh my God, thou made an infinite number of conquests known to thyself only. They were instantly furnished with a wonderful facility of prayer. God conferred on them his grace plentifully, and wrought marvellous changes in them. The most advanced of these souls found,

when with me, in silence, a grace communicated to them, which they could neither comprehend, nor cease to admire. The others found an unction in my words, and that they operated in them what I said to them. They said, "they had never experienced any thing like it." Friars of different orders, and priests of merit, came to see me, to whom our Lord granted very great favours, as indeed he did to all, without exception, who came in sincerity.

One thing was surprising, which was, that I had not a syllable to say to such as came only to watch my words, and to criticise on them. Even when I thought to try to speak to them, I felt that I could not, and that God would not have me do it. Some of them in return said, "The people are fools to go to see that lady. She cannot speak." Others of them treated me as if I were only a stupid simpleton. After they left me, there came one and said, "I could not get hither soon enough to apprize you not to speak to those persons; they come from such and such, to try what they can catch from you to your disadvantage." I answered them, "Our Lord has prevented your charity; for I was not able to say one word to them."

I felt that what I spoke flowed from the fountain, and that I was only the instrument of him who made me speak. Amidst this general applause, our Lord made me comprehend what the apostolic state was, with which he had honoured me; that to give ourselves up to the help of souls, in the purity of his Spirit, was to expose ourselves to the most cruel persecutions. These very words were imprinted on my heart: "To resign ourselves to serve our neighbour, is to sacrifice ourselves to a gibbet. Such as now proclaim, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord*, will soon cry out, *Take away, crucify.*" One of my friends speaking of the general esteem the people had for me, I said to her, "Observe what I now tell you, that you will hear curses out of the same mouths which at present pro-

nounce blessings." Our Lord made me comprehend that I must be conformable to him in all his states ; and that, if he had continued in a private life with his parents, he never had been crucified ; that when he would resign any of his servants to crucifixion, he employed such in the ministry and service of their neighbours. It is certain that all the souls employed herein by apostolic destination from God, and who are truly in the apostolic state, are to suffer extremely. I speak not of those who put themselves into it, who, not being called of God in a singular manner, and having nothing of the grace of the apostleship, have none of its crosses ; but of those only who surrender themselves to God without any reserve, and who are willing with their whole hearts to be exposed, for his sake, to sufferings without any mitigation. They must assuredly become a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men ; to God, of glory, by their conformity to Jesus Christ ; to angels, of joy ; and to men, a spectacle of cruelty and ignominy.

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#### CHAPTER XVIII.

*A considerable tumult is raised, by an order of friars, against the practice of inward prayer. Instances of the good effects of inward prayer, in the case of some young girls, and a laundress, who supports her paralytic husband, and five children. Reply of an old woman to the friars, who refuse her absolution, and burn all the treatises on prayer. The friars afterward change their opinion, and become zealous advocates for prayer.*

AMONG so great a number of good souls, on whom our Lord wrought much by me, some were given me only as plants to cultivate. I knew their state, but had not that near connection with, or authority over them, which I had over others. It was then that I comprehended the true maternity beyond what I had done before ; for those of the

latter kind were given me as children, of whom some were faithful. I knew they would be so ; and they were closely united to me in pure charity. Others were unfaithful ; I knew that of these some would never return from their infidelity, and they were taken from me ; some, after slipping aside, were recovered. Both of them cost me much distress and inward pain, when, for want of courage to die to themselves, they gave up the point ; and revolted from the good beginning they had been favoured with.

Our Lord, amongst such multitudes as followed him on earth, had few true children. Wherefore he said to his Father, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition," shewing hereby that he lost not any beside of his apostles, or disciples, though they sometimes made false steps.

Among the different numbers of friars who came to see me, there was one order which discovered the good effects of grace more than any other. Some of that very order had before this, in a little town where Father la Combe was in the exercise of his mission, been actuated with a false zeal, and violent in persecuting all the good souls which had sincerely dedicated themselves to God, plaguing them after such a manner as can scarce be conceived, burning all their books which treated of silence and inward prayer, refusing absolution to such as were in the practice of it, driving into consternation, and almost into despair, such as had formerly led wicked lives, but were now reformed, and preserved in grace by means of prayer, becoming spotless and blameless in their conduct. These friars had proceeded to such an excess of wild zeal as to raise a sedition in that town, in which a father of the oratory, a person of distinction and merit, received strokes with a stick in the open street, because he prayed extempore in the evenings, and on Sundays made a short fervent prayer, which insensibly habituated these good souls to the use and practice of the like.



I never in all my life had so much consolation as to see in this little town so many pious souls who with a heavenly emulation gave up their whole hearts to God. There were girls of twelve or thirteen years of age, who industriously followed their work all the day long, in silence, and in their employments enjoyed a communion with God, having acquired a fixed habit herein. As these girls were poor, they placed themselves two and two together, and such as could do it, read to the others who could not. One saw there the innocence of the primitive christians revived. There was in that town a poor laundress who had five children, and a husband paralytic, lame in the right arm, and yet worse distempered in mind than in body. He had little strength left for any thing else than to beat her : yet this poor woman bore it with all the meekness and patience of an angel, while she by her labour supported him and his five children. She had a wonderful gift of prayer, and amidst her great suffering and extreme poverty, preserved the presence of God, and tranquillity of mind. There was also a shop-keeper, and one who made locks, very much affected with God. These were close friends. Sometimes the one and sometimes the other read to this laundress ; and they were surprised to find that she was instructed by the Lord himself in all they read to her, and spoke divinely of it.

Those friars sent for this woman, and threatened her much if she did not leave off prayer, telling her it was only for churchmen to pray, and that she was very bold to practice it. She replied, (or rather he who instructed her, for she was very ignorant of herself,) “ that Christ had commanded all to pray, and that he had said, *what I say unto you, I say unto all*. Mark xiii. 33. 37. without specifying either priests or friars ; that without prayer she could not support her crosses and poverty ; that formerly she had lived without it, and then was very wicked ; that since she had been in the exercise of it, she had loved God with all

her soul ; so that to leave off prayer was to renounce her salvation, which she could not do." She added, "that they might take twenty persons who had never practised prayer, and twenty of those who were in the practice of it : then, said she, inform yourselves of the lives of both sorts, and ye will see if ye have any reason to cry out against prayer." Such words as these, from such a woman, one would think might have fully convinced them ; but (instead of that) they only irritated them the more. They assured her, "she should have no absolution till she promised them to desist from prayer." She said, "It depended not on her, and that Christ is master of what he communicates to his creatures, and of doing with it what he pleases." They refused her absolution ; and after railing at a good taylor, who served God with his whole heart, they ordered all the books without exception, which treated on prayer, to be brought to them, and burned them with their own hands in the public square. They were hugely elated with their performance : but all the town presently arose in an uproar, on account of the late insolent and intolerable usage given to the father of the oratory. The principal men went to the Bishop of Geneva, and complained to him of the scandals of these new missionaries, so different from the others. Speaking of Father la Combe, who had been there before them on his mission, they said, "these seemed as if they were sent to destroy all the good he had done." The Bishop was forced to come himself to that town, and there to mount the pulpit, protesting he had no share in it, and that these fathers had pushed their zeal too far. The friars, on the other side declared, "they had done all they did, pursuant to the orders given them."

There were also at Tonon, young women who had retired together, being poor villagers, the better to earn their livelihood and to serve God. One of them read from time to time, while the others were at work, and not one went

out without asking leave of the eldest. They wove ribbands, or spun, and the strong supporting the weak. They separated these poor girls, and others beside them, in several villages, and drove them out of the church.

It was then the friars of this very order whom our Lord made use of to establish prayer in I know not how many places. And, into the places where they went, they carried a hundred times more books of prayer than those which their brethren had burned. The hand of God appeared to me wonderfully in these things. I had then occasion to know these friars in the way I am going to tell.

One day that I was sick, a brother, who has skill in diseases, and is useful therein, being come for a charitable collection, and hearing I was ill, came in to me, and gave me medicines proper for my disorder. We entered into a conversation which revived in him the love he had for God, which he acknowledged had been too much stifled by his great occupations. I made him comprehend that there was no employments which should hinder him from loving God, and from being occupied within himself. He readily believed me, as he already had a good share of piety, and of an interior disposition. Our Lord conferred on him many favours, and gave him to be one of my true children. What is wonderful, is, that all those whom he has given me are brought forth by me on the cross, in which sense he causes me to *fill up that which is behind of his passion*: (Col. i. 24.) Oh goodness of God thus to associate poor creatures to his great mysteries!

When our Lord gives me children after this manner, he gives them a very particular affection for me. They cannot forbear calling me their mother; which has been the case of many, and some of great note. Several whom I did not know but by their letters, have seen me in dreams, resolving all their difficulties. I have found that when our Lord honours a soul with spiritual fruitfulness, he gives it what

is necessary to support and nourish its children, according to their different degrees. I was sometimes so filled with these divine communications, that I have been ready to cry out, "Oh, my Lord, give me hearts to relieve myself of my fulness." When some of my children came to me, or new ones were given me, in whom grace was already strong, I was eased and comforted; they also felt an inconceivable plenitude of grace, and a greater gift of prayer, each according to their degree; which surprised them greatly at the first, and made them, when necessity separated me from them, feel a great want of me. But afterwards they experimentally comprehended this mystery; and when necessity separated me from them, or I did not know them, having never seen them, instructions and consolations were communicated to them, even afar off.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*A young woman brought out of a state of unbelief and error, becomes sensibly convinced that M. Guion was actuated in her labours by the Divine Spirit.*

THERE were there some good young women, who were particularly given me; and especially one who had felt a very great attraction to come to me: and our Lord gave her by me all she had need of; but when at a distance from me, she was strongly tempted, and then afraid to return to me; yet when she took courage and came, her pains and fears were all dissipated, and she experienced, while she was with me, that fulness of grace which is come by Jesus Christ: yet after this she was tempted so far as to imagine me to be a sorceress; and that it was thereby, that I had driven away from her the evil spirit, which had assaulted her, and that I had foretold her what would befall her, which actually did happen accordingly.

Under such an impression on her mind, she came to me, but opened not her lips. I knew her uneasiness, told her of it, and she confessed it. When we were at church, I said to her, "If it is an evil spirit which causes me to act towards you, let him continue to torment you; if it be a good spirit, I pray that during the service you may partake of that spirit." At the very beginning of the service her soul flowed with a peace of paradise, and was in so great an union with God, that she scarce knew whether she was in earth or in heaven. After that manner was our communion, and then she said in herself; "Oh how certain I am now that it is God who moves and guides her!" After prayers were over, she said to me, "Oh my mother, how fully sensible have I been that God is all in all in you! I have been in paradise."

When at any time after this she made slips, and concealed them from me, or covered them with disguises, I felt it at first; and that our Lord, who loves and accepts nothing but pure sincerity, rejected her therein. I saw, or rather experienced, how God rejects sinners from his bosom. All the cause of God's rejection is in the *will* and inclination of the sinner. If that *will* ceases, how horrible soever he be, God purifies him in his love, and receives him into his grace; but while that *will* remains, the rejection continues; though for want of ability seconding his inclination, he should not commit the sin he is inclined to, yet he never can be admitted into grace till the cause ceases, which is this wrong *will*, rebellious to the divine law. If that once ceases, God then totally removes the effects of sin, which stain the soul, by washing away the new defilements which he has contracted. If that sinner dies in the time that his *will* is rebellious and turned towards sin, as death fixes for ever the disposition of the soul, and the cause of its impurity is ever subsisting, such soul can never be received into God; its rejection must be eternal, as there is such an abso-

late opposition betwixt essential purity and essential impurity. It is the same way in this life. This cause, so long as it subsists, absolutely hinders the grace of God from operating in the soul. But if the sinner comes to die truly penitent, then the cause, which is the wrong *will*, being taken away, there remains only the effect or impurity caused by it. He is then in a condition to be purified. God, of his infinite mercy has provided a laver of love and of justice, a painful laver indeed, to purify this soul. And as the defilement is greater or less, so is the pain; but when the cause is utterly taken away, the pain entirely ceases. Now, I say, it is the very same here. Souls are received into grace, as soon as the cause of sin ceases; but they do not pass into God himself, till all its effects are washed away. If they have not courage to let him, in his own way and will, thoroughly cleanse and purify them, they never enter into the pure divinity in this life. As this purification is not effected but by pain, and the destruction of all the selfish wisdom and desires, this is the cause, why many pious souls, highly applauded of men, have still need of farther purification. Those who have not come so far as to be quite fixed in the pure love of God, are ever liable to change, and to transgress in some points in the will, or natural inclination, till they be dead to themselves, and passed into God, who renders the *will* in this state immutable; all that nature, that heaven which may be ever making it rise again, which is *self-love* in its many forms, some of them seeming both lawful and commendable in the sight of men, being thoroughly purged away, which God is very willing to do for us in this life: but this is not effected but by severe and extreme pains to us, and the loss of every support of artful, corrupt *self*. Hence the souls truly changed into his image, are more rare than I can set forth or express.

To return to my subject, I experienced that this young woman held to me still by a certain secret tie, as a sinner

does to his God, from whence he may still be received in him, when the cause of the rejection ceases. God incessantly solicits this will to cease to be rebellious, and spares nothing on his side for this good end. The will is free, yet grace follows it still. As soon as the will ceases to rebel, it finds grace at the door, ready to introduce its unspeakable benefits. Oh the goodness of God and baseness of the sinner, each of them amazing when clearly seen ! I felt, I say, how this young woman and many other souls adhered to mine by a tie of filiation ; but I found I could no more communicate grace to her as I had done, by reason of her want of simplicity in the *will*, and that it was impossible for the divine efflux to enter, till her dissimulation were destroyed, though I loved her much ; but that *will* in her occasioned the rejection, which could not end but by its change. How wonderful is God, to give poor creatures the experimental knowledge of his deep and mysterious secrets ! for what I have experienced in respect of her, I have done in regard to sundry others. But I have given her case as one example. Father la Combe thought her virtuous : when I told him a little of this fault of her's, he accused me of rash judgment, which indeed was far from me ; but he afterwards came to see for himself enough of her craft and artifice.

Before I arrived at Grenoble, the lady, my friend there, saw in a dream, that our Lord gave me an infinite number of children, all uniformly clad, bearing on their habits the marks of candour and innocence. She thought I was coming to take care of the children of the hospital. But as soon as she told me it, I discerned that it was not that which the dream meant ; but that our Lord would give me, by a spiritual fruitfulness, a great number of children ; that they would not be my true children but in simplicity, candour and innocence.

## CHAPTER XX.

*The great goodness of God, exhibited in several remarkable conversions through the instrumentality of M. Guion.*

THE good brother I have spoken of, (chap. xviii.) found himself disposed to lay open his heart to me like a child. Our Lord gave him through me all that was necessary for him; for though disposed to the spiritual life, yet for want of courage and fidelity he had not duly advanced in it.—Hereupon he said to me, “You are my true mother.” From that time God has granted him many favours through this poor nothing creature. I felt he was one of my sons, one of the most faithful and closely united. Every time he came to see me, he became more encouraged and fortified to die thoroughly to himself, sensibly assured of the power of God in me, which he felt, in his dependent state. Our Lord instructed him in silence, and prepared him to receive his grace, without the mediation of words, which carried on its operation in him, in proportion as he died more to to himself. Christ has declared, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” With the greatest certainty, through his blessed operations, is this experienced. As this brother was already advanced in the spiritual life, and had only stopped and been retarded in it, he was soon recovered hereby.

In proportion as his soul advanced sufficiently for continuing in silence before God, and as the Word operated on him in silence, being vivid and fruitful, and not a state of indolence, as some ignorantly imagine, he thereby grew in grace. Oh, immediate, ineffable Word! who tellest us every thing without articulating any thing! He who has never experienced thee knows nothing. It was then given to him to communicate with me in silence the operations of that divine Word; the fulness thereof in him became



more abundant, like a sluice lifted up, which discharges itself with profusion, and that with so much force and grace in souls well disposed, that the full river does not flow with more impetuosity. But alas! how few souls are pure enough for this enjoyment passing in them after such a manner! This fulness which he received, still emptied him more and more of himself, putting him in a state of deeper silence before God, and a greater detachment from every thing else. It still disposed him more both for God and for me.

Oh my God, how well I comprehended in this silence, that in souls which are wholly thine, thy grace flows like a river! This is that *well of water springing up into everlasting life*; the great mystery which Christ spoke of, and revealed to the Samaritan woman. It springs up in such abundance that there is a sufficiency in it for filling an infinite number of souls, each according to its degree, without ceasing to be full. Oh admirable hierarchy, which begins in this life, to continue through all eternity! Yes, there is a hierarchy among saints on earth, even as among angels in heaven. And those who have served as conduits to water their souls, shall continue such in eternity. The water of life will flow from the sacred source into the souls of all those who have lived by grace, more or less, as they are fitted, extended or dilated to receive of its abundance. And it requires more of largeness and extent both to receive and to communicate abundantly to others. Those who are dead in sin receive nothing of this plenitude of life.—Through the want of this they may properly be said to be dead; all the passages, by which life might flow into them, being closed up by sin. But souls living in the pure love of God, all receive from this fulness more or less, according as they are disposed or fitted for it by the purity and receptivity of the soul. But all who are come so far as to receive the grace, are not from thence in a condition to com-

municate it. They have a great way to advance before they become fitted for that.

This good brother had occasion to bring to me some of his companions; and God took hold of them all. It was at the very time that God gave me these good Religious, that the others of the same order were making all the ravages I have mentioned, and opposing with all their might the Holy Spirit of God. I could not but admire to see how God was pleased to make himself amends for former damages, by the pouring out his Spirit in abundance on these good friars, while the others were labouring vehemently against it, doing all they could to destroy its dominion and efficacy in their fellow mortals. But their labours of this kind had no great effect; those good souls instead of being staggered by persecutions, grew the stronger by it. The Superior, and the master of the novices of the house in which this good brother was, declared against me, without knowing me; and were grievously chagrined that a woman, as they said, should be so much flocked to, and so much sought after. For looking at the things as they were in themselves, and not as they were in God, who does whatever pleases him, they had nothing but contempt for the gift which was lodged in so mean an instrument, instead of esteeming God and his grace, attending to the meanness of the subject in which he sheds it. Yet this good brother at length got the Superior to come to see me, and thank me for the charities which he said I had done them: our Lord so ordered, that he found something in my conversation which reached and took hold of him. At length he was completely gained and brought over. And he it was, who some time after, being visiter, dispersed such a number of those books, bought at their own charge, which the others had tried utterly to destroy. Oh how wonderful art thou, my God! In all thy ways how wise, in all thy conduct how full of love! How well thou canst frustrate all the

false wisdom of men, and triumph over their vain precautions !

There were in this noviciate many novices. The eldest of them grew so very uneasy under his vocation, that he knew not what to do. So great was his trouble that he could neither read, study, pray, nor do scarce any of his duties. His companion brought him to me. We spoke awhile together, and the Lord discovered to me both the cause of his disorder and its remedy. I told it to him; and he began to practice prayer, even that of the heart. He was on a sudden wonderfully changed, and the Lord highly favoured him. As I spoke to him, grace wrought in his heart, and his soul drank it in, as the parched ground does the gentle rain. He felt himself quit of his pain before he left the room. He then readily, joyfully, and perfectly performed all his exercises, which before were done with reluctance and disgust. He now both studied and prayed easily, and discharged all his duties, in such a manner, that he was scarce known to himself or others. What astonished him most was a sprout of life which remained with him, and a gift of prayer. He saw that there was readily given him what he could never have before, whatever pains he took for it; and this enlivening sprout was the principle which made him act, gave him grace for his employments, and an inward fruition of the grace of God, which brought all good with it. He gradually brought me all the novices, all of whom partook of the effects of grace, though differently, according to their different degrees.—Never was there a more flourishing noviciate.

The master and Superior could not forbear admiring so great a change in their novices, though they did not penetrate the cause of it. One day, as they were speaking of it to the Collector, for they esteemed him highly on account of his merit and virtue, and telling him, they were surprised at the change in the novices, and the blessing the Lord

had bestowed on the noviciate, he said to them, "My fathers, if you will permit me, I will tell you the reason of it. It is the lady against whom ye have exclaimed so much without knowing her, whom God has made use of for all this." They were very much surprised; and both the master, though advanced in age, and his Superior then submitted humbly to practice prayer, after the manner taught by a little book,\* which the Lord inspired me to write, and of which I shall say more hereafter: and they reaped such benefit from it, that the Superior said to me, "I am become quite a new man. I could not practise prayer before, because my reasoning faculty was grown dull and exhausted; but now I do it as often as I will, with ease, with much fruit, and a quite different sensation of the presence of God:" and the master said, "I have been a *Religious* or friar, these forty years, and can truly say, that I never knew how to pray, nor have I ever known or tasted of God, as I have done since I read that little book."

Many others were gained to God, besides those whom I looked on to be my true children, and who cost me the pangs of their birth. For the others I felt not that maternity, and that intimate efflux of grace I have spoken of, though they were won to the Lord by my means. He gave me a very great number of children, and three famous friars, of an order by which I have been, and still am, very much persecuted. He made me also of service to a great number of nuns, of virtuous young women, and even men of the world: among the rest a young man of quality, who had quitted the order of the knights of Malta, to take that of the priesthood. He was the relation of a Bishop near him: he has been much favoured of the Lord, and is constant in prayer. I could not describe the great number of souls which were then given me, as well maids as wives,

\* The Short Method of Prayer.

priests, and friars. But there were three curates, one canon, and one grand-vicar, who were more particularly given me. There was one priest very intimately given me, for whom I suffered much, through his not being willing to die to himself, and loving himself too much; with a sad regret I saw him decaying, falling away till he was quite snatched from me. As for the others, there are some of them who have continued stedfast and immoveable, some whom the tempest has shaken a little, but not torn away. Though these start aside, yet they still return. But those who are snatched quite away return no more.

There was one true daughter given me, whom our Lord made use of to gain many others to him. She was in a strange state of death when I first saw her, and by me he gave her life and peace. She afterwards fell extremely ill. The doctors said she would die; but I had an assurance of the contrary, and that God would make use of her, (as he has done) to gain souls. There was in a monastery a young woman confined in a state of distraction. I saw her, I knew her case, and that it was not what they thought of it. As soon as I had spoken to her, she recovered: but the prioress did not like that I should tell her, my thoughts of it, because the person who had brought her thither was her friend. They plagued her more than before, and threw her back again into distraction.

A sister of another monastery was for eight years past in a deep melancholy, unrelieved by any one; for her director increased it, by practising remedies contrary to her disorder. I had never been in that monastery; for I did not go into such places, unless I was sent for, as I did not think it right to intrude, but left myself to be conducted of Providence. I was very much surprised that at eight o'clock at night one came for me from the Prioress. It was in the long days of summer, and being near it I went. I met with a sister who told me her case; she had gone to

such excess, that seeing no remedy for it, she had taken a knife to kill herself; but the knife fell out of her hand; and a person coming to see her had advised her to speak to me. Our Lord made me know at first what the matter was; and that he required her to resign herself to him, instead of resisting him as they had made her do for eight years. I was instrumental to draw her into such a resignation, that she entered at once into a peace of paradise: all her pains and troubles were instantly banished; and never returned since. She has the greatest capacity of any in the house. She was presently so changed as to be the admiration of the whole community. Our Lord gave her a very great gift of prayer and his continual presence, with a faculty and readiness for every thing. She was given me for a daughter; and also a domestic sister, who had troubled her for twenty-two years past, was delivered from her troubles, and is become a very religious woman. That produced a close tie of friendship between the prioress and me, as the wonderful change and the peace of this sister surprised her, she having so often seen her in her terrible pains. I also contracted other such ties in this monastery, where there are souls under the Lord's special regard, whom he drew to himself by the means he had been pleased to make choice of.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

*She commences her Commentary on the Bible. The Short and Easy Method of Prayer is first published by a counsellor of Parliament.*

I WAS moved to read the Holy Scripture. It had been some time since I had read at all, not finding in myself any void to be filled. When I began, I was impelled to write the passage, and instantly upon it, its explication was given me, which I also wrote, going on with inconceivable expedition, light being poured in upon me in such a manner,

that I found I had in myself latent treasures of wisdom and knowledge which I had not yet known of. Before I wrote I knew not what I was going to write. And after I had written, I remembered nothing of what I had penned; nor could I make use of any part of it for the help of souls; but the Lord gave me, at the time I spoke to them, without any study or reflection, all that was necessary for them.— Thus the Lord made me go on with an explanation of the holy internal sense of the Scriptures.\* I had no other book but the Bible, nor ever made use of any but that, and without even seeking for any thing. When in writing on the Old Testament, I made use of passages of the New, to support what I had said, it was without seeking them, they were given me along with the explication; and in writing on the New Testament, and therein making use of passages of the Old, they were given me in like manner without my seeking any thing. I had scarce any time for writing but in the night, allowing only one or two hours for sleep. The Lord made me write with so much purity, that I was obliged to leave off or begin again, as he was pleased to order. He proved me every way herein. When I wrote by day, often suddenly interrupted, I left the word unfinished, and he afterwards gave me what he pleased. What I wrote was not in my head: that part was kept free and disengaged. If I gave any way to reflection, I was punished for it, and could not proceed. And yet sometimes I was not duly attentive to the divine Spirit, thinking I did well to continue when I had time, even without feeling his immediate impulse or enlightening influence, from whence it is easy to see some places clear and consistent, and others which have neither taste nor unction; such is the difference of the Spirit of God from the human and natural spirit, though they are left just as I wrote them, yet I am ready, if

\* All her explications have been published; those on the Old Testament, in twelve small octavo volumes, and on the New Testament, in eight.

ordered, to adjust them according to my present light.— Didst thou not, Oh my God, turn me a hundred ways, to prove whether I was thine without any reserve, through every kind of trial, or whether I had not yet some little interest for myself? My soul became hereby readily pliable to every discovery of the divine will, and whatever kind of humiliations attended me to counterbalance my Lord's favours, until every thing, high or low, was rendered alike to me.

Methinks the Lord acts with his dearest friends as the sea with its waves. Sometimes it pushes them against the rocks where they break in pieces, sometimes it rolls them on the sand, or dashes them on the mire, then instantly it retakes them into the depths of its own bosom, where they are absorpt with the same rapidity that they were first ejected. Even among the good the far-greater part are souls only of *mercy*; and surely that is well: but to appertain to divine *justice*, oh how rare, and yet how great! *Mercy* is all distributive in favour of the creature, but *justice* destroys every thing of the creature, without sparing any thing. It can demand nothing but for itself; yet they must be voluntary victims, and such as may have no other object but itself in what they suffer.

The lady, who was my particular friend, began to conceive some jealousy on the applause given me, God so permitting it for the farther purification of her soul, through this weakness, and the pain it caused her. Also some confessors began to be uneasy, saying, "It was none of my business to invade their province, and to meddle in the help of souls; and that there were some of the penitents which had an entire openness for me." It was easy for me to observe the difference betwixt those confessors who, in their conducting of souls, seek nothing but God, and those who seek themselves therein; for the first came to see me, and rejoiced greatly at the grace of God bestowed on their pen-



itants, without fixing their attention on the instrument : the others on the contrary, tried underhand, to stir up the town against me. I saw that they would be in the right to oppose me, if I had intruded of myself ; but I could do nothing but what the Lord made me do. At times there came some to dispute and oppose me. Two friars came, one of them a man of profound learning and a great preacher. They came separately, after having studied for a number of difficult things to propose to me. But though they were matters far out of my reach, the Lord made me answer as justly as if I had studied them all my life ; after which I spoke to them as he inspired me. They went away not only convinced and satisfied, but even affected with the love of God.

I still continued writing with a prodigious swiftness ; for the hand could scarce follow fast enough the spirit which dictated, and through the whole progress of so long a work, I never altered my manner, nor made use of any other book than the Bible itself. The transcriber, whatever diligence he used, could not copy in five days what I wrote in one night. Whatever is good in it comes from God only.—Whatever is otherwise, from myself ; I mean from the mixture which I have made, without duly attending to it, of my own impurity with his pure and chaste doctrine. In the day, I had scarce time to eat, by reason of the vast numbers of people which came thronging to me. I wrote the Canticles in a day and a half, and received several visits besides.

Here I may add to what I have said about my writings, that a considerable part of the book of Judges happened by some means to be lost. Being desired to render that book complete, I wrote over again the places lost. Afterwards when the people were about leaving the house, they were found. My former and latter explications, on comparison, were found to be perfectly conformable to each other, which

greatly surprised persons of knowledge and merit, who attested the truth of it.

There came to see me a counsellor of the parliament, a servant of God, who finding on my table *a tract on prayer*, which I had wrote long before, desired me to lend it. Having read it and liked it much, he lent it to some friends, to whom he thought it might be of service. Every one wanted copies of it. He resolved therefore to have it printed. The impression was begun, and proper approbations given to it. They requested me to write a preface, which I did, and thus was that little book printed, which has since made so much noise, and been the pretence for the several persecutions. This counsellor was one of my intimate friends, and a pattern of piety. The book has already passed through five or six editions; and our Lord has given a very great benediction to it. Those good friars took fifteen hundred of them. The devil became so enraged against me on account of the conquest which God made by me, that I was assured he was going to stir up against me a violent persecution. All that gave me no trouble. Let him stir up against me ever so strange persecutions, I know they will all serve to the glory of my God.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

*A violent tempest of rage and envy breaks out against her. Of her spiritual communications and intelligences.*

A POOR girl, of very great simplicity, who earned her livelihood by her labour, and was inwardly favoured of the Lord, came all sorrowful to me, and said, "Oh my mother, what strange things have I seen!" I asked what they were, "Alas," said she, "I have seen you like a lamb in the midst of a vast troop of furious wolves. I have seen a frightful

multitude of people of all ranks and robes, of all ages, sexes and conditions, priests, friars, married men, maids and wives, with pikes, halberts, and drawn swords, all eager for your instant destruction. You let them alone without stirring, or being surprised, and without offering any way to defend yourself. I looked on all sides to see whether any one would come to assist and defend you; but I saw not one." Some days after, those, who through envy were raising private batteries against me, broke forth. Libels began to spread. Envious people wrote against me without knowing me. They said, "I was a sorceress, that it was by a magic power I attracted souls, that every thing in me was diabolical; that if I did some charities, it was because I coined, and put off false money," with many other gross accusations, equally false, groundless, and absurd.

As the tempest increased every day, some of my friends advised me to withdraw, but before I mention my leaving Grenoble, I must say something farther of my state while here.

Jesus Christ was communicated to me in all his states. His apostolic state was at that time set most before me. When I could neither write nor impart the overflowing of my soul any other way, I was all languishing. I experienced what our Lord said to his disciples, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you.* Luke xxii. 15. It was the communion of himself by that supper, and by his passion, when he said, *It is finished.* John xix. 30. *And bowing his head he gave up the ghost,* returning his spirit as well as his kingdom to his Father; as if he had then said, "My Father, my kingdom is that I reign by thee, and thou by me, over men; which can only be done by the shedding abroad of my spirit upon them: let then my spirit be communicated to them by my death." In this is the finishing and consummation of all things. Often the plenitude of this spirit took from me the liberty of writing. I had nothing

for myself; all was for others; yet I wanted nothing. I was like those nurses who are full of milk, though they are not themselves fed thereby.

Before I began to write in the book of Kings on what regards David, I felt so close an union with that holy patriarch, that I communicated with him, as if he had been present. I comprehended the greatness of his grace, the conduct of God over him, and all the circumstances of the states through which he had passed; that he was a lively figure of Jesus Christ, and a chosen pastor for Israel. It seemed to me that all our Lord made, and would make me do for souls, would be in union with David, my dear King, and with those for whom there was given me at the same time an union like that which I had with him; but still most of all with Jesus Christ, sprung from the seed of David. In this divine union my words had wonderful effect, even the formation of Jesus Christ in the souls of others. I was in no wise mistress of saying the things I did. He who conducted me, made me say what he pleased, and as long as he pleased. To some I was not permitted to speak a word; and to others there flowed forth as it were a deluge of grace, and yet this pure love admitted not of any superfluity, or matter of empty amusement. When questions were asked, to which an answer were useless, it was not given me. It was the same case in regard to such as our Lord was pleased to conduct through death to themselves, and who came to seek for human consolation. I had nothing for them but what was purely necessary, and could proceed no farther. I could at least only speak of indifferent things, in such liberty as God allows, in order to suit every one, and not be unsociable or disagreeable to one's neighbour; but for his own *word*, he himself is the dispenser of it. Oh, if preachers were duly careful to speak only in that spirit, what fruits would they bring forth in the lives of their hearers! With my true children I could com-

municate best in silence, in the spiritual language of the divine word. I had the consolation some time before to hear one read in St. Augustine a conversation he had with his mother. He complains of the necessity of returning from that heavenly language, to words, by reason of our weakness. I sometimes said, "Oh my Love, give me hearts large enough to receive and contain the fulness bestowed on me." I had wonderful intelligences opened to me, of the communication at the supper between Jesus Christ and St. John, and continued between St. John and the mother of our Lord; how the holy child communicated himself to the Eastern sages, and to the shepherds, conveying to them the knowledge of his divinity.

After this manner, when the Holy Virgin approached Elizabeth, a wonderful commerce was maintained between Jesus Christ and St. John the Baptist, who after this, manifested no eagerness to come to see Christ, but was drawn to retire into the desert, to receive the like communications with the greatest plenitude. When he came forth to preach repentance, he said not, that he was the Word, but only a Voice which was sent to make way, or open a passage into the hearts of the people, for Christ the Word. He baptised only with water, for that was his function; for as the water in running off, leaves nothing, so does the Voice when it is past. But the Word baptised with the Holy Ghost, because he imprinted himself on souls, and communicated with them by that Holy Spirit. It is not observed that Jesus Christ said any thing during the whole obscure part of his life, though it is true that not any of his words shall be lost. Oh Love, if all thou hast said and operated in silence were to be written, I think *the whole world could not contain the books that should be written.* John xxi. 25.

All that I experienced, was shewn me in the Holy Scripture; and I saw with admiration that there passed nothing within my soul which was not in Jesus Christ and in the

**Holy Scripture.** I must pass over many things in silence, because they cannot be expressed; and if they were expressed could not be understood or comprehended.

I often felt much for Father la Combe, who was not yet fixed in his state of interior death, but often rose and fell into alternatives. I was made sensible that he was a vessel of election, whom God had chosen to carry his name among the Gentiles, and that he would shew him how much he must suffer for that name. Oh God! who can ever be able to comprehend the pure and holy union which thou formest between thy children? A carnal world judges carnally of them, and imputes to human attachment what is from the purest grace. If this union, by any deviation be broken, the more pure and perfect it is, the more painfully will it be felt; the separation of the soul from God by sin, being worse than that from the body by death. For myself I may say I had a continual dependence on God, in every state; my soul was ever willing to obey every motion of his Spirit. I thought there could not be any thing in the world which he should require from me, to which I would not give myself up readily and with pleasure. I had no interest at all for myself. When God requires any thing from this wretched nothing, I find no resistance left in me to do his will, how rigorous soever it may appear. Oh, my Love, if there is a heart in the world of which thou art the sole and absolute master, mine seems to be one of that sort. Thy will, however rigorous, is its life and its pleasure; for it no more subsists but in thee alone. I have wandered; which is usual with me, occasioned by interruptions, as well as by two grievous indispositions, which I have had since I began to write, as also by resigning myself to the matter which carries my mind forward.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*Her departure for Marseilles. Is in danger of being drowned in the river Rhone. Great respect paid to her by the bishops of Marseilles and Grenoble. She embarks for Genoa, where after a stormy passage she arrives. Her treatment there.*

To resume the thread of my story, the Bishop of Grenoble's almoner persuaded me to go for some time to Marseilles, to let the storm pass over ; telling me that I should be well received there, it being his native soil, and many people of merit there. I wrote to Father la Combe for his consent hereto. He readily gave it. I might have gone to Vercel ; for the Bishop of Vercel had wrote me very obliging letters, earnestly pressing me to come thither : but a human respect, and fear of affording a handle to my enemies, gave me an extreme aversion thereto. When I make use of the term *enemies*, I must explain myself. It is not that I account any mortal to be in reality my enemy ; viewing those whom God makes use of, no otherwise than as instruments of his justice.

Beside the above, the Marchioness of Prunai, who, since my departure from her, had been more enlightened by her own experience, having met with a part of the things which I thought would befall her, had conceived for me a very strong friendship and intimate union of spirit, in such a manner, that no two sisters could be more united than we were. She was extremely desirous that I would return to her. But I could not resolve upon this, for fear lest it should be thought that I was gone after Father la Combe. But, oh my God, how was this relick of self-love overturned by the secret ways of thy adorable Providence ! I had yet that exterior support of having it in my power to say, that I had never gone after him. There had been no room given to any body to accuse me of any indirect attachment to him ; for when it depended on myself to continue with

him, I did not do it. The Bishop of Geneva had not failed to write against me to Grenoble, as he had done to other places. His nephew had gone from house to house to cry me down. All this was indifferent to me ; and I did not cease to do to his diocese all the good in my power. I even wrote to him in a respectful manner ; but his heart was too much closed to yield to such things.

Before I went off from Grenoble, that good girl I have spoken of, came to me weeping, and told me, "I was going, and that I hid it from her, because I would have nobody know it ; but that the devil would be before me in all places I should go to ; that I was going to a town, where I should scarce be arrived, but he would stir up that whole town against me, and would do me all the harm he possibly could." What had obliged me to conceal my departure, was my fear of being loaded with visits, and testimonies of friendship, from a number of good persons, who had a very great affection for me.

I embarked then upon the Rhone, with my chambermaid and a young woman of Grenoble, whom the Lord had highly favoured through my means. The Bishop of Grenoble's almoner also accompanied me, with another very worthy Ecclesiastic. We met with many alarming accidents and wonderful preservations ; but those instant dangers, which affrighted others, far from alarming me, augmented my peace. The Bishop of Grenoble's almoner was much astonished. He was in a desperate fright, when the boat struck against the rock, and opened at the stroke ; and in his emotion looking attentively at me, he observed that I did not change my countenance, or move my eyebrows, retaining all my tranquillity. I did not so much as feel the first emotions of surprise, which are natural to every body on those occasions, as they depend not on ourselves. What caused my peace in such dangers as terrify others at once, was my resignation to God, and because



death is much more agreeable to me than life, if such were his will, to which I desire to be ever patiently submissive.

As I was going off from Grenoble, a man of quality, a great servant of God, and one of my intimate friends, had given me a letter for a knight of Malta, who was very devout, and whom I have esteemed since I have known him, as a man whom our Lord designed to serve the order of Malta greatly, and to be its ornament and support by his holy life. I had told him that I thought he should go thither, and that God would assuredly make use of him to diffuse a spirit of piety into many of the knights. He is actually gone to Malta, where the first places were soon given him. This man of quality sent him the little book of prayer written by me, and printed at Grenoble. He had a chaplain very averse to the spiritual path. He took this book, and condemned it at once, went to stir up a part of the town, and amongst the rest a set of men who call themselves the seventy-two disciples of St. Cyran.\* I arrived at Marseilles at ten o'clock in the morning, and that very afternoon all was in a noise against me. Some went to speak to the Bishop, telling him that, on account of that little book, it was necessary to banish me from that city. They gave him the book, which he examined with one of his prebends. He liked it well. He sent for Monsieur Malaval and a father Recollect, who he knew had come to see me a little after my arrival, to enquire of them from whence that great tumult had its rise, which indeed had no other effect on me than to make me smile, seeing so soon accomplished what that young woman had foretold me. Monsieur Malaval and that good Religious told the Bishop what they thought of me; after which he testified much uneasiness at the insult given me. I was obliged to go to see him. He received me with extraordinary respect, and begged my excuse for what had happened, desired me

\* Chief of the Jansenists in France.

to stay at Marseilles, and assured me that he would protect me. He even asked where I lodged, that he might come to see me.

Next day the Bishop of Grenoble's almoner went to see him, with that other priest who had come with us. The Bishop of Marseilles again testified to them his sorrow for the insults given me without any cause; and told them, that it was usual with those persons to insult all such as were not of their cabal, that they had even insulted himself. They were not content with that. They wrote to me the most offensive letters possible, though at the same time they did not know me. I apprehended that our Lord was beginning in earnest to take from me every place of abode; and those words were renewed in my mind, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

In the short time of my stay at Marseilles, I was instrumental to support some good souls, and amongst others an Ecclesiastic, who till then was unacquainted with me. After having finished his thanksgiving in the church, seeing me go out, he followed me into the house in which I lodged: then he told me, "the Lord had inspired him to address me, and to open his inward state to me." He did it with as much simplicity as humility, and the Lord gave him through me all that was necessary for him; from whence he was filled with joy and thankful acknowledgments to God: for though there were many spiritual persons there, and even of his intimate friends, he never had been moved to open himself to any of them. He was a servant of God, favoured by him with a singular gift of prayer. During the eight days I was at Marseilles, I saw many good souls there; for, through all my persecutions, our Lord always struck some good stroke of his own right hand, and that good Ecclesiastic was delivered from an anxiety of mind, which had much afflicted him for some years past.

After I had left Grenoble, those who hated me, without knowing me, spread libels against me. A woman for whom I had a great love, and who I had extricated from an engagement which she had continued in for several years, and contributed to her discarding the person to whom she had been attached, suffering her mind to resume its fondness for that pernicious engagement, became so violently enraged against me for having broke it off, though I had freely been at some expence to procure her freedom from it, that she went to the Bishop of Grenoble, to tell him that I had counselled her to do an act of injustice. She then went from confessor to confessor, repeating the same story, to animate them against me. As they were too susceptible of the prejudices infused, the fire was soon kindled in all quarters. There were none but those who knew me, and who loved God, that took my part. They became more closely united to me in sympathy through my persecution. It had been very easy for me to destroy the calumny, as well with the Bishop of Grenoble as in town. I had only to tell who the person was, and to shew the fruits of her disorder: but as I could not declare the guilty person, without making known at the same time the other who had been her accomplice, who now, being touched of God, was very penitent, I thought it best for me to suffer and be silent. There was a very pious man who knew all her history, from the beginning to the end of it, who wrote to her, that if she did not retract her lies, he would publish the account of her wicked life, to make known both her gross iniquity and my innocence. She continued some time in her malice, writing that I was a sorceress, with many other falsehoods. Nevertheless, some time after, she had such a cruel remorse of conscience on this account, that she wrote both to the Bishop and others, to retract what she had said. She got one to write to me, to inform me that she was in despair for what she had done; that

God had punished her in such a manner, that she had never felt any thing like it. After these recantations, the outcry abated, the Bishop was disabused, and since that time he has testified a great regard for me. This creature had, among other things, said that I made myself be worshipped; and other unparalleled fooleries. As she had formerly been beside herself, I think in what she did to me there was more of weakness than malice.

From Marseilles, I knew not how or whither I should turn next. I saw no likelihood either of staying, or returning to Grenoble, where I had left my daughter in a convent. On the other side, Father la Combe had wrote to me that he did not think I ought to go to Paris. I even felt a strong reluctance to the view of going thither, which made me think it was not yet the time for it. One morning I felt myself inwardly pressed to go off; I took a litter to go to see the Marchioness of Prunai, which was, I thought, the most honourable refuge for me in my present condition. I imagined I might have passed through Nice to her habitation, as some had assured me I might. But when I arrived at Nice, I was greatly surprised to learn that the litter could not pass the mountain to go thither. I knew not what to do, nor which way to turn, being here alone, forsaken of every body, and not knowing what God required of me. My confusion and crosses seemed daily to increase. I saw myself, without refuge or retreat, wandering as a vagabond. All the tradesmen, whom I saw in their shops, appeared to me happy, in having a dwelling place of their own to retire to. Nothing in the world seemed harder than this wandering life to me, who naturally loved honour and decorum. As I was in this uncertainty, not knowing what course to take, one came to tell me that next day a shallop would set off, which used to go in one day to Genoa; and that if I chose it, they would land me at Savona, from whence I might get

myself carried to the Marchioness of Prunai's house. To that I consented, as I could not be supplied with any other way of getting thither.

I had some joy at embarking on the sea. I said in myself, "If I am the dregs of the earth, the scorn and discouraging of nature, I am now going to embark on the element which above all others is the most treacherous; if it be the Lord's pleasure to plunge me in the waves, it shall be mine to perish in them. There came a tempest in a place pretty dangerous for a small boat; and the mariners were some of the wickedest. The irritation of the waves gave a satisfaction to my mind. I pleased myself in thinking that those mutinous billows might probably supply me with a grave. Perhaps I carried the point too far in the pleasure I took, at seeing myself beaten and bandied by the swelling waters. Those who were with me, took notice of my intrepidity, but knew not the cause of it. I asked of thee, my Lord, some little hole of a rock to be placed in, there to live separate from all creatures. I figured to myself, that some uninhabited island would have terminated all my disgraces, and put me in a condition of infallibly doing thy will. But, oh my divine Love, thou designed me a prison far different from that of the rock, and quite another banishment than that of the uninhabited island. Thou reserved me to be battered by billows, more irritated than those of the sea. Calumnies proved the outrageous unrelenting waves, to which I was to be exposed, in order to be lashed and tossed by them without mercy. By the tempest swelling against us, we were kept back, and instead of a short day's passage to Genoa, we were eleven days in making it. How peaceable was my heart in so violent an agitation! The swelling of the sea, and the fury of its waves, were, as I thought, only a figure of that swelling fury which all the creatures had against me. I said to thee, oh my Love, "Arm them all to avenge thyself on me for my infidelities,

and for those of all the creatures." I saw thy right hand armed against me; and I loved more than my life the strokes it gave me. We could not land at Savona. We were obliged to go on to Genoa. We arrived there in the beginning of the week before Easter.

While I was there, I was obliged to bear the insults of the inhabitants, caused by the resentment they had against the French, for the havock of a late bombardment. The Doge was lately gone out of the city, and had carried off with him all the litters. Wherefore I could not get one, and was obliged to stay several days at excessive expences; for the people there demanded of us exorbitant sums, and as much for every single person, as they would have asked for a company at the best eating-house in Paris. I had little money left, but my store in Providence could not be exhausted. I begged with the greatest earnestness for a litter at any price, to pass the feast of Easter at the Marchioness of Prunai's house. It was then within three days of Easter; and I could scarcely any way get myself understood. By the force of entreaty, they brought me at length a sorry litter with lame mules, and told me that they would take me readily to Verceil, which was only two days journey, but demanded an enormous sum for it; they would not engage to take me to the Marchioness of Prunai's house, as they knew not where her estate lay. This was to me a strong mortification; for I was very unwilling to go to Verceil; nevertheless, the proximity of Easter, and want of money in a country where they used every kind of extortion and tyranny, left me no choice. I was under an absolute necessity of submitting to be thus conveyed to Verceil.

Thus Providence led me whither I would not. Our muleteer was one of the most brutal men to be met with; and for an increase of my affliction, I had sent away to Verceil the Ecclesiastic who accompanied us, to prevent their surprise at seeing me there, after I had protested against going thither.

That Ecclesiastic was very coarsely treated on the road, through the hatred they bore to the French ; and they made him go part of the way on foot, so that though he set off the day before me, he arrived there only a few hours sooner than I did. And as for the fellow who conducted us, seeing he had only women under his care, he used us in the most insolent and brutish manner.

We passed through a wood infested with robbers. The muleteer was afraid, and told us, that, if we met any of them on the road, we should be murdered ; for they spared nobody. Scarce had he uttered these words, when there appeared four men well armed. They immediately stopped the litter. The man was exceedingly frightened. I made a light bow of my head, with a smile, for I had no fear, and was so entirely resigned to Providence, that it was all one to die this way or any other ; in the sea, or by the hands of robbers. But oh my God, how wonderful at this, as at many other times, was thy protection over me ! How many perils have I passed through upon mountains, and on the very edges of tremendous steep rocks ! How often hast thou checked the foot of the mule already slipping over the precipice ! How often have I been like to be thrown headlong from those frightful heights, into hideous torrents which, though rolling in chasms far below our shrinking sight, forced us to hear them by their horrible noise. When the dangers were most manifest, then was my faith the strongest, as well as my intrepidity, being unable to wish for any thing else than what should fall out, whether to be dashed against the rocks, drowned, or killed any other way ; every thing in the will of God being equal to me. The people who used to convey or attend me, said “ they had never seen a courage like mine ; ” for the most alarming dangers, and the time when death appeared the most certain, were those which seemed to please me the most. Was it not thy pleasure, oh my God, which guarded me in every imminent

danger, and held me back from rolling down the precipice, on the instant of sliding over its dizzy brow? The more easy I was about life, which I bore only because thou wast pleased to bear it, the more care thou tookest to preserve it. There seemed a mutual emulation betwixt us, on my part to resign it, and on thine to maintain it. The robbers then advanced to the litter; but I had no sooner saluted them, than God made them change their design. Having pushed off one another, as it were to hinder each of them from doing any harm; they respectfully saluted me, and, with an air of compassion, unusual to such sorts of persons, retired. I was immediately struck to the heart, oh my Lord, with a full and clear conviction that it was a stroke of thy right hand, who had other designs over me than to suffer me to die by the hand of robbers. It is thy sovereign power which takes away their all from thy devoted lovers; and destroys their lives with all that is of *self* without pity or sparing any thing.

The muleteer, seeing me attended only by two young women, thought he might use me as he would, perhaps expecting to draw money from me. Instead of taking me to the inn, he brought me to a mill, in which there was not one woman. There was but one single chamber, with several beds in it, in which the millers and muleteers lay together. In that chamber they wanted to force me to stay. My efforts to oblige the muleteer to take me to the inn, proving unavailing, I was constrained to go out on foot, at ten o'clock at night, carrying a part of my clothes, and to go a good way more than a quarter of a league of that country, (where the leagues are very long,) in the dark, in a strange place, not knowing the way, crossing one end of that wood infested with robbers, to endeavour to get to the inn. The muleteer, seeing us go off from the place where he had wanted to make me lodge, hooted after us in a very abusive manner. I bore my humiliation cheerfully, not



without feeling it. But the will of God, and my resignation to it, rendered every thing easy to me. We were very well received at the inn : and the good people there did the best in their power, for our recovery from the fatigue we had undergone. They assured us the place we had left was very dangerous. Next morning we were obliged to return on foot to the litter, for the man would not bring it to us. On the contrary, he fell on us with a shower of fresh insults. And to consummate his base behaviour, he sold me to the post, whereby I was forced to go the rest of the way in a post-chaise instead of a litter.

In this equipage I arrived at Alexandria, a frontier town, subject to Spain, on the side of the Milanese. Our driver took us, according to their custom, to the post-house, I was exceedingly astonished when I saw the landlady coming out, not to receive him, but to oppose his entrance. She had heard there were women in the chaise, and taking us for a different sort of women from what we were, she protested against our coming in. On the other hand, the driver was determined to force his entrance in spite of her. Their dispute rose to such a height, that a great number of the officers of the garrison, with a vast mob, gathered at the noise, who were surprised at the odd humour of the woman in refusing to lodge us. With whatever earnestness I intreated the post to take us to some other house, he would not : so obstinately was he bent on carrying his point. He assured the landlady we were persons of honour and piety too ; the marks whereof he had seen. At last, by force of pressing instances, he obliged her to come to see us. As soon as she had looked at us, she acted as the robbers had done : she relented at once and admitted us.

No sooner had I alighted from the chaise, than she said to us, "Go shut yourselves up in that chamber hard by, and do not stir, that my son may not know you are here ; for as soon as he knows it he will kill you." She said it

with so much force, as did also the servant maid, that, if death had not so many charms for me, I should have been ready to die with fear. The two poor girls with me were under frightful apprehensions. When any stirred, or came to open the door, they thought they were coming to cut their throats. In short they continued in a dreadful suspense, between life and death, till next day, when we learned that the young man had sworn to kill any woman who lodged at the house ; because a few days before, an event had fallen out, which had like to have ruined him ; a woman of a bad life, having there privately murdered a man in some esteem, that had cost the house a heavy fine ; and he was afraid of any more such persons coming, and not without reason.

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

*She arrives at Verceil, where she is kindly and affectionately treated.*

AFTER such sorts of adventures, and others which it would be too long to recite, I arrived at Verceil. I went to the inn where I was very ill received. I sent for Father la Combe, who I thought had been already apprised of my coming thither, by the Ecclesiastic whom I had sent before, and who would be of so much service to me. This Ecclesiastic was only a little while arrived. How much better on the road should I have fared, if he had been with me ! For in that country they look upon ladies, accompanied with Ecclesiastics, with veneration, as persons of honour and piety. Father la Combe came in a strange fret at my arrival, God so permitting it ; he could not hide it from me. He said that every one would think I was come after him, and that would injure his reputation, which I found in that country was very high. I had had no less

pain to go thither. It was necessity only which had obliged me to submit to such a disagreeable task. The Father received me with coolness, and in such a manner as let me sufficiently see his sentiments, and indeed redoubled my pain. I asked him if he required me to return, adding, "that, if he did, I would go off that moment, however oppressed and spent, both with fatigues and fastings." He replied, "he did not know how the Bishop of Vercell would take my arrival, after he had given over all his expectations of it, after I had so long, and so obstinately, refused the obliging offers he had made me; since which he no longer expressed any desire to see me."

It seemed to me then as if I were rejected from the face of the earth, without being able to find any refuge in it, and as if all creatures were combined to crush me. I passed that night without sleep, not knowing what course I should pursue, being persecuted by my enemies, and a subject of disgrace to my friends.

When it was known at the inn, that I was one of Father la Combe's acquaintance, they treated me with the greatest respect and kindness; for they esteemed him as a saint. The Father knew not how to tell the Bishop of my arrival, and I felt his pain more than my own. As soon as that Prelate knew that I was arrived, he sent his niece, who took me in her coach, and carried me to her house; but things were only done out of ceremony; and the Bishop, not having seen me yet, knew not what to think of a journey so very unexpected, after I had thrice refused, though he sent expresses on purpose to desire me to come to him. He was out of humour with me. Nevertheless, as he was informed that my design was not to stay at Vercell, but to go to the Marchioness of Prunai's house, he gave orders for me to be well treated. He could not see me till Easter Sunday was over, for he officiated all the eve and all that day. After it was all over, he came in a chaise to his

niece's house to see me; and though he understood French hardly any better than I did Italian, he was very well satisfied with the conversation he had with me. He appeared to have as much favour for me, as he had indifference before. The second visit gained him entirely.

He conceived as strong a friendship for me as if I had been his sister: and his only pleasure, amidst his continual occupations, was to come and pass half an hour with me in speaking of God. He wrote to the Bishop of Marseilles to thank him for having protected me in the persecution there. He wrote to the Bishop of Grenoble; and he omitted nothing to manifest his affectionate regard for me. He now seemed to think alone of finding out means to detain me in his diocese. He would not hear of my going to see the Marchioness of Prunai. On the contrary he wrote to her to come and settle with me in his diocese. He sent Father la Combe to her, on purpose to exhort her to come; assuring her that he would unite-us all to make a congregation. The Marchioness entered into it readily, and so did her daughter too. They would have come with Father la Combe, but that the Marchioness was sick. The Bishop was active and earnest in collecting and establishing a society of us, and found several pious persons, and some very devout young ladies, who were all ready to come to join us: but it was not the will of God to fix me thus, but to crucify me yet more.

The fatigue of travelling, made me fall sick. That girl also whom I brought from Grenoble, fell sick. Her relations who were a covetous set of people, took it in their heads that, if she should die in my service, I should get her to make a will in my favour. They were much mistaken: For far from desiring the property of others, I had given up my own. Her brother, full of this apprehension, came with all speed; and the first thing he spoke to her about, though he found her recovered, was to make a will. That made a

great noise in Verceil; for he wanted her to return with him, but she refused. I advised her to do what her brother desired her. He contracted a friendship with some of the officers of the garrison, to whom he told ridiculous stories, as that I wanted to use his sister badly: he pretended she was a person of quality, while she was only of a low birth. They gave out what I was still afraid of, viz. that I was come after Father la Combe. They persecuted him even on my account. The Bishop was much troubled at it, but could not remedy it. The friendship he had for me increased every day; because, as he loved God, so he did all those whom he thought desired to love him. As he saw me so much indisposed, he came to see me with assiduity and charity, when at leisure from his occupations. He made me little presents of fruits and other things of that nature. His relations were jealous of it, saying, "I was come to ruin him, and to carry off his money into France:" which was a thing the farthest from my thoughts. The Bishop patiently bore these affronts, hoping still to keep me in his diocese, when I should be recovered.

Father la Combe was his prebend and his confessor. He esteemed him highly. God made use of him to convert several of the officers and soldiers, who, from being men of scandalous lives, became patterns of piety. In that place every thing was mixed with crosses and souls gained to God. There was some of his Friars, who, after his example, were advancing toward perfection. Though I neither understood their language nor they mine, the Lord made us understand each other in what concerned his service. The Rector of the Jesuits took his time, when Father la Combe was gone out of town, to prove me, as he said. He had studied theological matters, which I did not understand. He propounded to me several questions. The Lord inspired me to answer him in such a manner, that he went away both surprised and satisfied. He could not forbear speaking of it.

The Bernabites of Paris, or rather Father de la Mothe took it in head to try to draw Father la Combe from thence to go preach at Paris. He wrote to the father-general about it, saying, "They had no subject at Paris, to support their house, that their church was deserted; that it was a pity to leave such a man as Father la Combe in a place where he only corrupted his language; that it was necessary to make his fine talents appear at Paris where he himself could not bear the burthen of the house, if they did not give him an assistant of such qualifications and experience." Who would not have thought all this to be sincere? The Bishop of Vercil, who was very much a friend to the father-general, having advice thereof, opposed it, and answered him, "that it would be doing him the greatest injury to take from him a man who was exceeding useful to him, and at the time that he had the greatest need of him."

The father-general of the Bernabites would not agree to the request of Father de la Mothe, for fear of offending the Bishop of Vercil, in removing from him a man who was so necessary to him in the present posture of affairs. As to me, my indisposition increased. The air, which is there extremely bad, caused me a continual cough, with frequent returns of fever, accompanied with defluxions on the lungs, which obliged me to have much blood taken from me. I grew so much worse that it was thought I could not get over it. The Bishop was much afflicted to see it, but having consulted the physicians, they assured him that the air of the place was mortal to me, whereupon he said to me with many tears, "I had rather have you live, though distant from me, than see you die here." He gave up his design of establishing his congregation, for my friend would not settle there without me; and the Genoese lady could not easily leave her own city, where she was respected. The Genoese besought her to set up there what the Bishop of Vercil had wanted her to set up near him. It was a con-

gregation almost like that of Madam de Miramion. When the Bishop had first proposed this affair, however agreeable it appeared, I had a presentiment that it would not succeed, and that it was not what our Lord required of me, though I submissively yielded to the good proposal, were it only to acknowledge the many special favours of this prelate, being assured that the Lord would know well how to prevent what he should now require of me. As this good prelate saw he must resign himself to let me go, he said to me, "You were willing to be in the diocese of Geneva, and there they persecuted and rejected you; and I, who would so gladly have you, cannot keep you." He wrote to Father la Mothe, that I should go in the spring, as soon as the season would permit; that he was exceeding sorry to be obliged to let me go; that he had looked upon me in his diocese as an angel," with other things, enough to have thrown me into confusion, if I could have attributed any thing to myself. Yet he still hoped to have kept Father la Combe, which probably might have been, had not the death of the father-general given it another turn.

Here it was that I wrote upon the Apocalypse, and that there was given me a greater certainty of all the persecutions of the most faithful servants of God, according to what I wrote thereof, in respect to future times. Here also I was strongly moved to write to Madam de Ch——. I did it with great simplicity; and what I wrote was like the great foundation of what the Lord required of her, having been pleased to make use of me to help to bring her into his ways, being one to whom I was much united, and by her to others.

## CHAPTER XXV.

*Father la Combe ordered to return to Paris, and to conduct Madam Guion thither. Sorrowful parting of the Bishop of Vercell with them. They go to see the Marchioness of Prunai, who, by their encouragement, establishes an hospital, as Madam Guion had done at Grenoble.*

THE Bishop of Vercell's friend, the father-general of the Bernabites, departed this life. As soon as he was dead, Father la Mothe wrote to the vicar general, who now held his place till another should be elected, renewing his request to have Father la Combe as an assistant. The father, hearing that I was obliged on account of my indisposition to return into France, sent an order to Father la Combe to return to Paris, and to accompany me in my journey thither, as his doing that would exempt their house at Paris, already poor, from the expences of so long a journey. On the receipt hereof, Father la Combe, who did not penetrate the poison under this fair outside, consented thereto; knowing it was my custom to have some Ecclesiastic with me in travelling. Father la Combe went off twelve days before me, in order to transact some business, and to wait for me at the passage over the mountains, as the place where I had most need of an escort. I set off in Lent, the weather then being very fine. It was a sorrowful parting to the prelate. I pitied him; he was so much affected both at losing Father la Combe and me. He caused me to be attended, at his own expence, as far as Turin, giving me a gentleman and one of his Ecclesiastics to accompany me.

As soon as the resolution was taken that Father la Combe should accompany me, Father la Mothe reported every where "that he had been obliged to do it, to make him return into France." He expatiated on the attachment I had for Father la Combe, pretending to pity me for



it. Upon this every one said, "that I ought to put myself under the direction of Father la Mothe." In the mean time he deceitfully palliated the malignity of his heart, writing letters full of esteem to Father la Combe, and some to me of tenderness, "desiring him to bring his dear sister, and to serve her in her infirmities, and in the hardships of so long a journey ; that he should be sensibly obliged to him for his care," with many other things of the like nature.

I could not resolve to depart without going to see my good friend, the Marchioness of Prunai, notwithstanding the difficulty of the roads. I caused myself to be carried thither, it being scarce possible to go otherwise on account of the mountains. She was extremely joyful at seeing me arrive. Nothing could be more cordial than what passed between us with abundance of mutual openness. It was then that she acknowledged that all I had told her had come to pass ; and a good Ecclesiastic, who lives with her, told me the same. We made ointments and plaisters together, and I gave her the secret of my remedies. I encouraged her, and so did Father la Combe, to establish an hospital in that place ; which was done while we were there. I contributed my mite to it, which has ever been blest to all the hospitals, which have been established in reliance on Providence.

I believe I had forgot to tell, that the Lord had made use of me to establish one near Grenoble, which subsists without any other fund than the supplies of Providence. My enemies made use of that afterwards to slander me, saying, "I had wasted my children's substance in establishing hospitals ;" though, far from spending any of their substance, I had even given them my own ; and though those hospitals have been established only on the fund of divine providence, which is inexhaustible. But so it has been ordered for my good, that all our Lord has made me do to his glory, has ever been turned into crosses to me. I have forgot to

particularize a great number both of crosses and indispositions ; they have been so many as to render the suppressing of some of them in a manner inevitable.

As soon as it was determined that I should come into France, the Lord made known to me, that it was to have greater crosses than I ever yet had. Father la Combe had the like sense. He encouraged me to resign myself to the divine will, and to become a victim offered freely to new sacrifices. He also wrote to me, "Will it not be a thing very glorious to God, if he should make us serve, in that great city, for a spectacle to angels and men?" I set off then with a spirit of sacrifice, to offer myself up to new kinds of punishments. All along the road, something within me repeated the very words of St. Paul, "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me : but none of these things move me ; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." Acts xx. 22, 23, 24. I could not forbear to testify it to my most intimate friends, who tried hard to prevail on me to stop, and not to proceed any further. They were all willing to contribute a share of what they had, for my settlement there, and to prevent my coming to Paris. But I found it my duty to hold on my way, and to sacrifice myself for him, who first sacrificed himself for me.

At Chamberry we saw Father la Mothe, who was going to the election of a Father-General. Though he affected an appearance of friendship, it was not difficult to discover that his thoughts were different from his words, and that he had conceived dark designs against us. I speak not of his intentions, but to obey the command given me to omit nothing. I shall necessarily be obliged often to speak of him. I could wish with all my heart it were in my power to suppress what I have to say of him. If what he has done

respected only myself, I would willingly bury all ; but I think I owe it to truth, and to the innocence of Father la Combe, so cruelly oppressed, and grievously crushed so long, by wicked calumnies, by an imprisonment of several years, which in all probability will last as long as life.— Though Father la Mothe may appear heavily charged in what I say of him, I protest solemnly, and in the presence of God, that I pass over in silence many of his bad actions.

I saw then his design very clearly. Father la Combe observed it well also. Some of my friends apprized us that Father la Mothe had evil schemes against us ; but they little thought them to be so desperately atrocious as they turned out. They thought that he would discharge Father la Combe after he had made him preach, and would for that bring some troubles on him. As it had formerly been said to him, *that we should be united together*, so now at Chamberry it was inwardly declared to him, *that we should be separated*. Father la Mothe was at the chapter every day, repeating his desires to Father la Combe not to leave me, but to accompany me all the way to Paris. Father la Combe asked him leave to let me go alone to Grenoble, as he was desirous to go to see his flock at Tonon. He made a difficulty of granting him that ; so much sincerity he affected.

I went off for Grenoble. On my arrival there I was seized with a fever which held me fifteen days. That good brother, the collector, hereby had exercise for his charity. He gave me remedies, making me only take viper broth in all my sauces, which, with the change of air, gradually removed the disorder. All those whom God had given me, the first time I was at Grenoble, came to visit me in my illness ; and were filled with joy at seeing me again. They shewed me the letters and retractions of that poor passionate girl, and I did not see that any body retained an impression against me from her stories. The Bishop here mani-

ferred more kindness to me than ever, assuring me that he had never believed any thing of them, and made me an offer to stay in his diocese. They farther pressed me with new instances to induce me to stay at the general hospital. But it was not the place where God required me to be. Every thing announced the cross to me. I was penetrated with the impression thereof continually.

That good girl of whom I have spoken, who had foreseen so many persecutions to befall me, had again many presentiments of the crosses which were about falling in a torrent upon us at Paris. She said, "What will you go to do there, to be crucified?" All along the road such souls as were spiritual, and of grace, spoke to us of nothing but crosses; and that impression that *bonds and afflictions awaited me*, was ever present. I come then, oh my Sovereign Lord! to sacrifice myself to thy will. Thou knowest what crosses I have had to bear from my own relations, what an universal decry I am under: and yet, through all this persecution, thou dost not fail to gain souls to thyself in every place, and at every time; and I think myself overpaid for all my troubles and pains, were they only to procure the salvation and perfection of one soul. It was in this place, oh God, that thou wast willing to erect a theatre of thy will and works by the cross, and the good to be done to souls thereby.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE  
**LIFE OF LADY GUION.**

PART THIRD,  
FROM HER RETURN TO PARIS.

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CHAPTER I.

*Plots are contrived to ruin Father la Combe, and to involve Madam Guion in his fall.*

SCARCE had I arrived at Paris, but I readily discovered the bad designs of some persons against both Father la Combe and myself. Father la Mothe, who conducted the whole tragedy, artfully dissembled, according to his custom; flattering me to the face, while he was aiming the keenest wounds behind the back. He and his confederates, wanted, for their own interest, to persuade me to go Montargis, (my native place) hoping thereby to get the guardianship of my children, and to dispose of both my person and effects. All the persecutions from Father la Mothe and my family have been attended on their part with views of interest; and those against Father la Combe have sprung from rage and revenge, because he, as my director, did not oblige me to do what they wanted; as well as out of jealousy. I might enter into a long detail on this head, sufficient to convince all the world hereof: but I suppress it to avoid prolixity. I shall only say that they threatened to deprive me of what little I had reserved to myself. To this I only replied, "That I would not go to law, that if they were resolved to take from me the little I had left, (little, indeed, in comparison of what I had given up,) I would surrender it entirely to them;" being quite free and

willing not only to be poor, but even in the very extremity of want, in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I arrived at Paris on Magdalen's eve, 1686, exactly five years after my departure from that city. After Father la Combe arrived there, he was soon followed and much applauded. I perceived some jealousy in Father la Mothe hereupon, but did not think that matters would be carried so far as they have been. The greatest part of the Bernabites of Paris, and its neighbourhood, joined against Father la Combe, induced thereto from several causes that particularly related to their order. But all their calumnies and evil attempts were overthrown by the unaffected piety of Father la Combe, and the good which multitudes reaped from his labours.

I had deposited a little sum of money in the hands of Father la Combe (with the consent of his Superior,) to serve for the entrance of a Nun. I thought myself obliged in conscience to do it; for she had, through my means, quitted the new Catholicks. It was that young woman whom I mentioned before, (see Part II. chap. v.) whom the priest of Gex wanted to win over. La Mothe wanted to have that money, and signified to la Combe, "that, if he did not make me give it him for a wall, which he had to rebuild in his convent, he would make him suffer for it." But the latter answered, "that he could not in conscience advise me to do any thing else but what I had already resolved, in favour of that young woman." So now he and the Provincial ardently longed to satisfy their desire of revenge. They employed all their thoughts on the means of effecting it.

For this purpose they sent to Father la Combe, to confess, a man and a woman, who were united to commit every sort of crime with impunity, and to persecute the servants of God. I think there never was such another artifice. The man counterfeits all sorts of hands, and is fit

for executing any vile design. They pretended to be very devout ; and among such a number of souls, as came from all parts to Father la Combe to confess, he never discerned these diabolical spirits ; God so permitted it, who had given power to the devil to treat him like Job.

One evening before this, being alone in my chamber, retired in prayer, all of a sudden my state of childhood seemed to be taken from me, to make way for that of my being joined with Jesus Christ crucified. What passed in this new union of love to that divine object, himself alone knows. My state still becoming deeper, as I had borne Jesus Christ in his denudation and crosses, so now I seemed to bear him in his crucifixion, which was the finishing of all his states. Nothing but experience can make any comprehend what I mean. These words at this time I felt impest, *And he was numbered with the transgressors*, Mark xv. 28. And it was put in my mind that I must bear Jesus Christ, in this state, in its whole extent. Oh my Lord, if there has not yet been poured upon me enough of reproaches and ignominies, finish and consummate that state to me by the last punishment. Every thing will be well received as coming from thee. For me to suffer for thy name sake, was the contract of our sacred marriage : and thy handmaid acknowledges thy goodness to her, continued all along to this day, in sanctifying her sufferings to the honour of thy worthy name.

I received a letter from Father la Combe, who wrote to me in these terms, "The time looks heavy," (speaking of Father la Mothe's humour in regard to him) "I know not when the thunder will fall : but every thing shall be welcome from the hand of God." In the mean time the husband of that wicked creature, who counterfeited the saint, in order to play his game the better, left off going to confess to Father la Combe, but sent his wife, who said, *she was very sorry that her husband had quitted that Father ; she*

told him, *that God had revealed to her things to come, and that he was going to meet with great persecutions.* It was easy for her to know it, since she was planning them with Father la Mothe, the Provincial, and her husband.

During this time I went into the country to the house of the Dutchess of C.\* There I found several persons, whose interior progress I was instrumental to assist ; they were of the number of my spiritual children. I felt a strong impulse to communicate to them in silence : but as it was strange to some of them, admitting natural timidity, I failed in fidelity to what God required of me. They read a passage of scripture, which they interpreted in a manner quite contrary to the sense given me of it, which oppressed my spirit exceedingly ; and the more so, because I durst not speak, on account of certain persons present, who held me in a kind of bondage : but after dinner I had an opportunity to speak to some of them, which gave some relief to my troubled mind. Often, from the plenitude which filled my soul, I was favoured with a discharge on my best disposed children, to our mutual joy and comfort, and not only when present, but sometimes when absent. I even felt it to flow from me into their souls. When they wrote to me, they informed me that at such times they had received abundant infusions of divine grace. Our Lord had given me that spirit of truth, which knows how to *refuse the evil, and chuse the good.* Even when any preached, or talked of pious subjects, I felt in myself that which rejected every thing of human conception or opinion, and accepted only that which was the pure truth.

Father la Combe wrote to me while I was in the country, that he had found an admirable woman (meaning her I have mentioned above, *the counterfeit saint*) and gave me some circumstances respecting her, which put me in fear for him. Nevertheless, as the Lord gave me nothing par-

\* Most probably the Dutchess of Chevreuse.



ticular thereupon, I wrote to him that I resigned him to God for that, as for the rest.

The husband of that woman, induced by the enemies of Father la Combe, wrote defamatory libels, to which they attached the propositions of Molinos, which had been current for two years past in France, declaring that they were the sentiments of Father la Combe. These libels were spread about in the communities in all parts. Father la Mothe and the Provincial, acting as persons well affected to the church, carried them to the Official or Judge of the Ecclesiastic court, who joined in the dark design. They shewed them to the Archbishop, saying, "it was out of their zeal, and that they were exceeding sorry that one of their fraternity was an heretic, and as such execrable." They also brought me in, but more moderately, saying "Father la Combe was almost always at my house," which was very false; for I could scarce see him, but at the confessional, and that for very short spaces. Several other things equally false they liberally gave out of us both.

They bethought themselves of one thing further likely to favour their scheme. They knew I had been at Marseilles, and thought they had obtained a good foundation for a fresh calumny. They counterfeited a letter from a person at Marseilles (I think I heard it was from the Bishop) addressed to the Archbishop of Paris, or to his official, in which they wrote, that I had been at Marseilles, in great intimacy with Father la Combe; that he, while there, had eaten meat in Lent, and done very scandalous things.—Father la Mothe came to try to draw me into his snare, and to make me say, in the presence of the people he had brought, that I had been at Marseilles with Father la Combe. "There are," said he, "shocking accounts sent against you, by the Bishop of Marseilles. You have there fallen into great scandals with Father la Combe; there are good witnesses of it." I replied with a smile, "The calumny is

notably devised: but it had been proper to know first whether Father la Combe had been at Marseilles, for I do not believe he was ever there in his life. I was, while there, with such and such, and during that time Father la Combe was labouring at Verceil." He was confounded, and went off, saying, "There are witnesses however, of its being true." He went immediately to ask Father la Combe if he had not been at Marseilles. He assured him he never had been there. They were struck with the disappointment. They then gave out that it was Seisel, which was in the letter. Now this Seisel is a place I have never been at, and there is no Bishop there.

Father la Mothe and the Provincial carried about their libels, with those propositions of Molinos, from house to house, saying, they were the errors of Father la Combe. They plotted together. They determined to take a journey into Savoy, to collect and bring memorials against Father la Combe and me. The Provincial set off, though but newly returned from visiting a province bordering on Savoy, giving a strict charge to Father la Mothe, who was enough inclined without it, to spare no pains or cost to ruin Father la Combe.

They plotted with the Official, a man well versed in such artifices. They suborned that woman. She told Father la Combe, "that she had heard wonderful things of me, which had given her an ardent desire to see me." As she farther told him, that she was in great want and distress, he sent her to me for my charity; I gave her half a louis d'or. At that time she was a stranger to me; but, after a little converse with her, I was struck with horror: yet I kept it to myself.

A few days after, she came again to ask me for something to get herself bled. I told her, "I had a maid who could do it well, whom I would get to do it for her." She replied, that "she was not a person to be bled by any but

surgeons." I then gave her a fifteen penny piece. She took it with disdain, then went and threw it to Father la Combe, asking "if she was a person to be put off with fifteen-pence." But she learned that evening, from her husband, that the time, not yet ripe for discovery, required longer dissimulation.. She then came again to Father la Combe to beg his pardon, saying, "it was a rash fit of passion which had made her act as she did. She asked him also for the fifteen-pence. He told me then nothing of all this; but I had a certainty that she was a wicked hypocrite, bent on some bad design; and so I told Father la Combe, who chid me for it, saying, "It was only my own imagination, that I wanted charity, that she was a religious woman."

There came to me a virtuous young woman, a stranger, who told me she thought herself obliged, as she knew I was intimate with Father la Combe, to apprise me that he confessed a woman who deceived him. She told me of base things that woman had done, and of her thefts at Paris. I desired her to tell him the same herself. She said she had attempted it; but he told her it was not acting according to charity. In a certain shop that vile woman spoke ill of him. They let him know it, but he seemed not to believe it. She sometimes came to my house. I turned pale at the sight of her. My domestics perceived it, especially one who felt the same horrors as I did.

## CHAPTER II.

*Father la Mothe tries to induce Madam Guion and Father la Combe to quit Paris ; in order that their flight may cause them to pass for guilty.*

One day a confessor sent for me. He related to me what this woman and her husband had told him, and what lies he had caught them in. I went directly to tell it to Father la Combe, when, as if the scales fell from his eyes, he beheld her in her true colours, revolving what he had seen in her and heard from her.

As soon as I was come home, she came to see me, and to beg money to pay her house-rent. I ordered the servants not to let her in. I was very sick, and so they told her. She wanted to force her entrance. Another maid, who knew her baseness, then went to the door, and told her, "I was not to be spoken with ;" she scolded them exceedingly, but they patiently bore it. Hereupon she went to the Superior of the Norbertines,\* and uttered the most vile calumnies against me ; the falsehood of the principal of which was soon manifested.

Moreover, those who instigated her to relate these things, knew that, if they were brought to trial, it must be before secular judges, which was what they did not like. They then resolved to attack me only on the article of faith, to

\* St. Norbert, founder of the Premonstrants, was born in the dutchy of Cleves in 1080. About the year 1118 he sold his paternal estate, gave it to the poor, resigned all his preferments, which before he had held, and travelled preaching freely from one town to another. The Pope approved of his conduct ; and it is said he wrought miracles. St. Bernard gave him a solitary valley called Premonstre whither he retired Anno Dom. 1120, where he founded an order for Monks called Norbertines. He was afterwards made Archbishop of Madgeburgh in 1127, where he brought the Canons, though for sometime they mutinied, to his pitch of austerities at last. Here he died in 1134 ; and was canonized, for a Saint, by Pope Gregory XII. in 1532.

bring me before the Ecclesiastical court ; and to do this by means of a little book, entitled, *A short and easy method of Prayer* ; though my name was not in it, and though it had been approved by the Doctors of Sorbonne.\*

La Mothe came to me, and told me that there were at the Archbishop's palace frightful memorials against la Combe, that he was an heretic, and a friend of Molinos.— Now he never knew Molinos, and so I told la Mothe ; and farther, that if he would accompany la Combe to the Archbishop, he would soon undeceive him. He promised me to do it the next day, but took care not to do it. I told him of the base woman above-mentioned. He coldly answered, " She is a saint." La Combe, on hearing this, went to la Mothe to desire him to go with him to the Archbishop. He told him, " the memorials were not against him but against me." La Mothe went into the country for two days, leaving la Combe in his place. He gave him a strict charge not to leave the house till his return. And this he did only to hinder him from going to the Archbishop, to make known the truth to him while himself was absent.

The Abbe de Gaumont, a man of singular piety, near eighty years of age, formerly acquainted with me, paid me a visit. He brought with him Monsieur Bureau, a doctor of Sorbonne, whom la Mothe hated, because one of his penitents, who had been liberal, and given him a great deal, had left him and chosen Bureau for her confessor. La Mothe said to me, " You see Monsieur Bureau, I don't like him." I asked him his reason, saying, " I did not go to seek him, and that he came to me very seldom, and was a man in great reputation." He went away, and deposed at the Bishop's court, that I held assemblies with Bureau and Gaumont, and that he had put a stop to one of them ; which

\* The first and most considerable College of the university of Paris, in which there were 63 colleges in all, founded in the reign of St. Lewis, by Robert Sorbonne, which name was given to the whole university of Paris.

was very false. He then accused me also of sundry other things. The judge of that court was glad of having this occasion against Bureau, having long hated him. They set to work that wicked woman's husband; and soon were counterfeited letters (from the Superiors of religious houses in which he had been the confessor) prepared. They wrote to this judge, that Bureau had preached and taught errors, and troubled those houses. It was a very easy matter for Bureau to expose the falsehood hereof. For those Superiors disavowed the said letters: and yet they made the King believe him guilty, whereupon he was banished.

One day la Mothe came again to me with the old story, that there were horrible memorials against la Combe, wanting to induce me to persuade him, to retire out of the way; and what was this for, but that his flight might make him pass for guilty? It was because he feared he could not yet otherwise carry his point, being bent on his ruin. I replied, "If Father la Combe be guilty, he ought to be punished; if not, he ought to have gone with him to the Archbishop that his innocence might appear." La Combe desired him, to let him go himself to the Archbishop, if he would not go with him. He always said, he would go with him the next day, or some other day: then he pretended business, which would not admit his going at that time, though he often went thither without him.

At length la Mothe took off the mask. He said to me in the church, before la Combe, "It is now, my sister, that you must think of fleeing; for there are execrable memorials against you: you are charged with crimes of a deep dye." I was not moved in the least, but replied with my usual tranquility, "If I am guilty of such crimes, I cannot be too severely punished; wherefore I will not flee or go out of the way. I have made an open profession of dedicating myself to God entirely: and if I have done things offensive to him, whom I would wish both to love and to

cause to be loved by the whole world, even at the expence of my life, I ought by my punishment to be made an example to the world ; but if I am innocent, for me to flee is not the way for my innocence to be believed." As he saw that I continued firm in my resolution of suffering the utmost rather than to flee, he said to me in great wrath, " Since you will not do what I propose, I will go and acquaint all your family, that they may make you do it." I then desired him to let me go first to speak to them, or that we might go both together. He agreed that we should go both together the next day. The Lord shewed me the whole thread of this plot. I was struck to the heart, with a sense that la Mothe was gone off directly to prepossess the family against me.

I sent my footman with speed to take a coach for me, and went off in it. La Mothe was there before me.— When he found himself thus discovered, he broke out in a furious passion. He returned to the convent, and discharged his wrath on poor la Combe. He had not had time to meet with my children's guardian ; but told his sister that I was accused of heinous crimes ; and that it was necessary to cause me to quit the country. To which she answered, " I no more believe that she has done such things than that I have done them. What ! A woman who has lived as she has done ! I would answer for her, life for life. To make her fly ! Her flight is no such indifferent matter : for, were she ever so innocent, that would be to declare her guilty." He replied, " It is absolutely necessary to expedite her departure : it is the sentiment of the Archbishop." She asked him whither I must depart. He said to Montargis.— That gave her some suspicion. She said, " She must consult her brother upon it, and he would go to the Archbishop." At that he was confused, and desired that none of them would go ; that, as he was most concerned about the matter, he would go himself. I arrived just as he was going

out. She told me all this ; and I related to her all he had said to me. He returned and was several times baffled, contradicting himself, before us both.

Next day my children's guardian, went to the Archbishop's palace. La Mothe was there waiting to speak to him. When he saw this guardian, a counsellor of the Parliament, he turned pale. He begged of him not to speak to the Archbishop, telling him, that he himself would do it, being so much concerned for his sister. The counsellor replied, "I am obliged to serve her in an affair of this nature." He then begged him to let himself speak first to the Archbishop. "If he calls you first you shall go first ; if not, I will," said the counsellor. "But, sir," said la Mothe, "I will tell him you are here." "And I," said the counsellor, "will tell him you are here."

Presently the Archbishop called the counsellor, who told him "he had heard of strange memorials being there against me ; that he had known me long for a woman of virtue, and would answer for me, body for body." The Archbishop replied, that he knew not of any thing against me. The counsellor then told him, "that la Mothe had said, he had advised that I should go out of the way." The Archbishop replied, "That is not true ; for I have never heard any mention made of her before." The counsellor then asked if la Mothe might be called in. He was called, and the Archbishop asked him about it. Like one thunderstruck, he made a very bad defence. He said, he had it from the Father Provincial. He went away full of malice, and told la Combe, that he would make him pay dearly for the affront which had been put upon him.



## CHAPTER III.

*Father la Combe is imprisoned in the Bastile. An order is obtained also, for imprisoning Madam Guion.*

SEEING I could not be prevailed on to quit my station, the confederates in iniquity, having consulted with Monsieur Charon the Official, found means to ruin la Combe. They made the King believe, on the testimony of the scrivener and his wife, that he was a friend of Molinos, in his sentiments; and had committed certain crimes; though he was quite clear of them. The King hereupon ordered, "that he should not stir out of his convent, and that the Official should go thither to examine him." This order they concealed from la Combe, to the end that, by his going out for exercises of charity or of obedience, he might be arrested as a rebel to the King's orders. One afternoon he was told, as they had contrived it, that one of his penitents had been run over by a horse, and that he must go to confess her. Without delay he went to ask leave of la Mothe, who willingly gave him it. In the mean time the Official came, and made his verbal process, setting forth how he was gone out, and was rebellious to the King's orders. They told the Official he was at my house, though they well knew the contrary; and that it was above six weeks since he had been there; they told the Archbishop also, that he was always at my house.

One morning, soon after, they sent for the Official, and then ordered la Combe to go to say mass. He was surprised at the order, it not being his turn. Yet in obedience he went. After saying mass, he saw the Official go out of the house, who had then made his second verbal process, setting forth how la Combe was gone out again, in rebellion to the King's order. Thereupon he came to the Superior of the house, and asked him if a design were not carry-

ing on to surprise him, as he had just seen the Official going from the house. "He came to speak to me," said the Superior, "I asked him if he had a mind to speak to you: he said, no."

The Official came a third time. La Combe saw him out of the window, and desired to speak to him. He was told the Official's business was only with the Superior: and yet the Official then made his third verbal process, setting forth how la Combe was absent a third time, in rebellion to the King's order. La Combe, as I had advised him, wrote to the Official, desiring him not to refuse him that favour which is granted to criminals; which is *to hear them*. I sent his letter by a person unknown. The Official said he would come after dinner without fail. La Combe was uneasy at having written this letter without the leave of his Superior, and therefore told him of it. On which the Superior sent two friars to the Official, for what purpose it is easy to judge. As I was going to a new hired house, I saw these two friars, and had an apprehension of their errand. I caused them to be followed, till they entered the Official's house. It then appeared that a surprise was designed.

La Mothe, mean while, pretended a willingness to serve him. He went to him, and said, "My father, I know you have certificates of your doctrine from the Inquisition, also approbations from the holy congregation of rites. Such credentials are incontestable: and since you are approved at Rome, a simple Official has nothing to say to you in regard to your doctrine." Hereupon la Combe, in the simplicity of his heart, believing him to be honest and sincere, brought him all these papers, but never could get them back again. In vain he asked for them. La Mothe told him he had sent them to the Official, and the Official said he had not received them, nor ever heard any thing about them. One day, being at his confessional, he said to me,

"I resign myself to reproaches and ignominies. Do you sacrifice me to God, as I am going to sacrifice myself to him." Soon after he was arrested, when at dinner, viz. on the third of October, 1687.

The Provincial sent for that Abbe who had been grand Vicar to the Bishop of Verceil, and discharged by him for his misconduct. (See Part II. Chap. xxiv.) He came on purpose to Paris to depose falsehoods against la Combe; but his lies and scandals were so glaring, that his unworthy patrons could not save him from being lodged in the Bastile. Two days after him, la Combe also was lodged in the same prison. Though on his trial he appeared quite innocent, and they could not find any thing whereupon to ground a condemnation, yet they made the king believe he was a dangerous man in the article of religion. He was then shut up in a certain fortress of that great prison for life: but as his enemies heard that the captains in that fortress esteemed him, and treated him kindly, they got him removed into a much worse place. God, who beholds every thing, will reward every man according to his works. I know by an interior communication that he is very well content, and fully resigned to God.

La Mothe now endeavoured more than ever to induce me to flee, assuring me that, if I went to Montargis, I should be out of all trouble; but that, if I did not, I should pay for it. He insisted on my taking himself for my director, which I could not agree to. He decried me wherever he went, and wrote to his brethren to do the same. They wrote to me very abusive letters, and particularly, that, if I did not put myself under his direction, I was undone, I have the letters still by me. One Father desired me in this case to make a virtue of necessity. Nay, some advised me to pretend to put myself under his direction, and to deceive him; whereas, I abhorred the thought of a disguise or deceit. I bore every thing with the greatest tranquility,

without taking any care to justify or defend myself, leaving it entirely to God to order as he should please about me: and herein he was graciously pleased to increase the peace of my soul, while every one seemed to cry against me, and to look on me as an infamous creature, except those few who knew me well by a near union of spirit. At church I heard people behind me exclaim against me, and even some priests say, "It was necessary to cast me out of the church." I left myself to God without reserve, being quite ready to endure the most rigorous pains and tortures, if such were his will.

I never made any solicitation either for Father la Combe or myself, though charged with that among other things. Willing to owe every thing to God, I have no dependence on any creature. I would not have it said that any but God had made Abraham rich. To lose all for him is my best gain; and to gain all without him, would be my worst loss. Though at this time so general an outcry was raised against me, God did not fail to make use of me, to gain many souls to himself. The more persecution raged against me, the more children were given me, on which the Lord conferred great favours, through his poor handmaid.

While Father la Mothe was so industrious in blackening my character, to render what he said the more credible, he pretended to love and esteem me. In some respects he cried me up as it were to the skies, in others he cast me down into the abyss, or pit of perdition. Some days after, a good young woman acquainted me that the aforesaid scrivener, Gautier, had been at the Archbishop's palace, carrying a parcel of papers thither. These were the memorials Father la Mothe had spoken of. To disculpate himself he said to me, "You were in the right to say that was a wicked woman. It is she who has done this."

One must not judge of the servants of God by what their enemies say of them, nor by their being oppressed under

calumnies without any resource. Jesus Christ expired under pangs. God uses the like conduct towards his dearest servants, to render them conformable to his Son, *in whom he is always well pleased*. But few place that conformity where it ought to be. It is not in voluntary pains or austerities, but in those which are suffered in a submission ever equal to the will of God, in a renunciation of our whole selves, to the end that God may be our all in all, conducting us according to his views, and not our own; which are generally opposite to his. In fine, all perfection consists in this entire conformity with Jesus Christ, not in shining things which men esteem and cry up. It will only be seen in eternity who are the true friends of God. Nothing pleases him but Jesus Christ, and that which bears his mark or character.

They were continually pressing me to flee, though the Archbishop had spoken to myself, and bidden me not to leave Paris. But they wanted to render both me and Father la Combe criminal by my flight. They knew not how to make me fall into the hands of the Official: for if they accused me of crimes, it must be before other judges; and any other judge would have seen my innocence, and the false witnesses would have run the risque of suffering for it. They continually spread the outcry of horrible crimes; the Official assured me that he had heard no mention of any; for he was afraid lest I should retire out of his jurisdiction. They then made the King believe "that I was an heretic, that I carried on a literary correspondence with Molinos; (I, who never knew that there was a Molinos in the world, till the Gazette told me of it;) that I had wrote a dangerous book; and that on those accounts it would be necessary to issue forth an order to put me in a convent, that they might examine me; that, as I was a dangerous person, it would be proper for me to be locked up, to be allowed no commerce with any one; that I held assemblies;"

which was very false. To support this calumny my handwriting was counterfeited, and a letter forged as from me, importing, "that I had great designs, but feared lest they should prove abortive by the imprisonment of Father la Combe, for which reason I had left off holding assemblies at my own house, being too closely watched: but that I would hold them at the houses of such and such persons, in such and such streets;" who are people whom I do not know, nor ever before had heard named. This forged letter they shewed the King, and upon it an order was given for my imprisonment.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*She falls very sick, on which account her imprisonment is postponed.*

THIS order would have been put in execution two months sooner than it was, had I not fallen very sick. I had inconceivable pains, and a fever. The pangs I had for five weeks caused me to lose my senses. Twice I received, as I was thought near expiring, *the holy viaticum*. One of my friends had acquainted Father la Mothe, knowing him to be my brother, but not that he had any hand in Father la Combe's imprisonment, that she had sent me a certificate from the Inquisition in said la Combe's favour, having heard that his own was lost. This was a very good piece; for they made the King believe that he had run away from the Inquisition; but this shewed the contrary.

Father la Mothe then came to me, when I was under excessive pains, counterfeiting all the affection and tenderness in his power, and telling me "that the affair of Father la Combe was going on very well, that he was just ready to come out of prison with honour, that he was very glad of it; that if he had only this certificate, he would be delivered presently. Give me it then, said he, and it will be

done." At first I made a difficulty of doing it. "What! said he, will you be the cause of ruining poor Father la Combe, having it in your power to save him, and cause us that affliction, for want of what you have in your hands." I yielded, ordering it to be brought and given him. He suppressed it, and gave out that it was lost. It never could be got from him again. The ambassador from the Court of Turin sent a page to me for this certificate, designing to make the proper use of it to serve Father la Combe. I referred him to Father la Mothe. The page went to him and asked him for it. He denied that I had given it to him; saying, "Her brain is disordered which makes her imagine it." The page came back to me, and told me his answer: the persons in my chamber bore witness that I had given it to him. Yet all this signified nothing: it could never be got out of his hands; but on the contrary he insulted me, and set others also to do it, though I was so weak that I seemed to be at the very gates of death.

They told me they only waited for my recovery to clap me in prison. He made his brethren believe that I had treated him ill. They wrote to me; one, "that it was for my crimes that I suffered: and that I should put myself under the conduct of Father la Mothe, or otherwise should repent;" another, "that I was frantic and ought to be bound; lethargic, and to be awakened; a monster of pride, since I would not suffer myself to be cleansed and conducted by Father la Mothe." Such was my daily feast in the extremity of my pains; deserted of my friends, and oppressed of my enemies; the former being ashamed of me, through the calumnies which were forged and industriously spread; the latter let loose to persecute me; under all which I kept silence, leaving myself to the Lord. To Father la Mothe's insults I returned mildness, and made him presents.

There was not any kind of infamy, error, sorcery, or sacrilege, of which they did not accuse me. As soon as I

was able to bear being carried to the mass in a chair, I was told I must speak to the prebend. (It was a snare, concerted between Father la Mothe and the Canon at whose house I lodged. I spoke to him with much simplicity, and he approved of what I said. Yet two days after, they gave out that I had uttered many things, and accused many persons ; and from hence they procured the banishment of sundry persons, whom I had never seen nor heard of. They were men of honour. One of them was banished, because he said, " my little book is a good one." It is remarkable that they say nothing to those who prefix their approbations, and that, far from condemning the book, it has been reprinted since I have been in prison, and advertisements of it posted up at the Archbishop's palace, and all over Paris. In regard to others, when they find faults in their books, they condemn the books and leave the persons at liberty : but as for me, my book is approved, sold, and spread, while I am kept a prisoner for it.

The same day that those gentlemen were banished, I received a *lettre de cachet*, or order, sealed, and addressed to me, to repair to the Convent of the visitation of St. Mary's, in the suburb of St. Antoine. I received it with tranquility, which surprised the bearer exceedingly. He could not forbear expressing it, having seen the extreme sorrow of those who were only banished. He was so touched with it as to shed tears. And though his order was to carry me off directly, he was not afraid to trust me, but left me all the day, desiring me to repair to St. Mary's in the evening. On that day many of my friends came to see me, and found me very cheerful, which surprised such of them as knew my case. I could not stand, I was so weak, having a fever every night, it being only a fortnight since I received the *holy viaticum*. I thought they would leave me my daughter and maid to serve me. My daughter was most at my heart, having cost me much care in her education. I had endeav-



oured, with divine assistance, to root out her faults, and to dispose her to have no will of her own ; which is the best disposition for a child. She was not yet twelve years of age.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Her imprisonment in a convent, a letter full of falsehoods is forged, as of her writing, to serve as a pretext for the justice of her imprisonment.*

On the 29th of January, 1688, I went to St. Mary's. There they let me know that I must neither have my daughter nor a maid to serve me, but must be locked up alone in a chamber. Indeed, it touched me to my heart, when my daughter was taken from me. They would neither allow her to be in that house, nor any body to bring me any news of her. I was then obliged to sacrifice my daughter, as if she were mine no longer. The people of the house were prepossessed with so frightful an account of me, that they looked at me with horror. For my jailor they singled out a nun, whom they thought would treat me with the greatest rigour, and in this they were not mistaken.

They asked me who was now my confessor. I named him ; but he was seized with such a fright that he denied it ; though I could have produced many persons who had seen me at his confessional. So then they said they had caught me in a lie ; and that I was not to be trusted. My acquaintance now said they knew me not, and others were at liberty to invent stories, and say all manner of evil of me. The woman, appointed for my keeper, was gained over by my enemies, to torment me as an heretic, an enthusiast, one deranged in mind, and an hypocrite. God alone knows what she made me suffer. As she sought to surprise me in my words, I watched them, to be more exact in them ;

but I fared the worse for it. I made more slips and gave her more advantages over me thereby, beside the trouble in my own mind for it. I then left myself as I was, and resolved, though this woman should bring me to the scaffold, by the false reports which she was continually carrying to the Prioress, that I would simply resign myself to my lot ; so I re-entered into my former condition,

Soon after I came into this convent, I had a dream, in which I saw the sky opening all of a sudden, and as it were a shower of bright fire. There were with me a multitude of people, all of whom betook themselves to flight, in order to escape it. As to me, I prostrated myself on the ground, and said, "Oh my God, it is I who am the victim of thy justice." I soon awaked full of certainty that I should earn this title of *victim of divine justice*. Monsieur Charon, the Official, and a Doctor of Sorbonne, came four times to examine me. Our Lord did me the favour which he promised to his apostles, viz. to make me answer much better than if I had studied. Luke xxi. 14, 15. They said to me, "if I had explained myself, as I now did, all along in that short and easy method of prayer, I should not now have been here." My last examination was about a counterfeited letter, which they read and let me see. I told them the hand was no way like mine. They said, "it was only a copy ; that they had the original at home." I desired a sight of it, but could not obtain it. I told them, "I never wrote it, nor did I know the person to whom it was addressed ;" but they took scarce any notice of what I said.

After this letter was read, the Official turned to me and said, "You see, Madam, that after such a letter, there was foundation enough for imprisoning you." "Yes, Sir, said I, if I had written it." I shewed them its falsehoods and inconsistencies, but all in vain. I was left two months, and treated worse and worse, before either of them came again to me. Till then I had some hope that seeing my inno-

cence, they would do me justice : but now I saw that they did not want to find me innocent, but make me appear guilty.

The Official alone came the next time, and told me, " I must speak no more of the false letter ; that it was nothing." " How nothing, said I, to counterfeit a person's writing, and to make one pass for an enemy to the state !" He replied, " We will seek out the author of it." " The author, said I, is no other than the scrivener Gautier." He then demanded where the papers were which I had written on the Scriptures. I told him, " I would give them up when I should be out of prison ; but was not willing to tell with whom I had lodged them."

About three or four days before Easter he came again, with the Doctor, and a verbal process drawn up against me for rebelling, in not giving up my papers. Copies of my writings were then put into their hands ; for I had not the originals. I know not where those who got them from me have put them : but I am firm in the faith that they will all be preserved, in spite of the storm. The Prioress asked the Official how my affair went. He signified very well, and that I should soon be discharged : and this became the common talk ; but I had a presentiment of the contrary.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*She refuses to accept deliverance, being offered her on terms not consistent with a good conscience. Her consent required to a marriage of her daughter, which for good reasons she refuses.*

I had an inexpressible satisfaction and joy in suffering, and being a prisoner. The confinement of my body made me better relish the freedom of my mind. St. Joseph's day was to me a memorable day ; for then my state had more of heaven than of earth, beyond what any expression can

reach ; but that time was followed as it were with a suspension of every favour then enjoyed, a dispensation of new sufferings. I was obliged to sacrifice myself anew, and to drink the very dregs of the bitter draught. The dream I had had, wherein all the indignation of God fell upon me, came up again in my mind.

I never had any gall of resentment against my persecutors, though I well knew them, their spirit and their actions. Jesus Christ and the saints saw their persecutors, and at the same time saw, "that they could have no power except it were given them from above." John xix. 11. Loving the strokes which God gives, one cannot hate the hand which he makes use of to strike with. A few days after, the Official came, and told me he gave me the liberty of the cloister, that is, to go and come in the house. They were now very industrious in urging my daughter to consent to a marriage, which, had it taken place, would have been her ruin. To succeed herein, they had placed her with a relation of that gentleman whom they wanted her to marry. I had all my confidence in God, that he would not permit it to be accomplished, as that person had no tincture of christianity, being abandoned in his principles and morals !

The Prioress and the whole community united in giving the best testimonies of me that could be given of any body. Indeed the whole house now conceived a very great affection for me. Father la Mothe heard of it and was vexed. He soured the minds both of the Archbishop and the Official whose confessor he is. Far from letting me go out at the end of ten days, as had been said, they left me there several months. The Archbishop said, that I must expect nothing but from my repentance. I was tossed between hope and despair. Now I was told that my persecutors had the upper hand, and I thought I must be a prisoner all the rest of my days. On a sudden would come new days of hope. Then the affair seemed to be concluded in my

favour, and myself on the point of being owned and declared innocent. On which presently followed some reverse, new calumnies, new crimes discovered. I looked on myself as a reed beaten with the wind, one while laid down on the ground, another time raised up again. Presently I was told that Father la Mothe had obtained an order for putting me in a house of which he was the master, where it was thought he would make me suffer extremely; for he is very hard. Some of my friends wept bitterly at the hearing of it; but such was my resignation that I could not weep about it. There appears to be in me such an entire loss of what regards myself, that any of my own interests give me little pain or pleasure, ever wanting to will or wish for myself only the very thing which God does. An ignominious death on the scaffold, with which I have so often been threatened, makes not any alteration in me. As God will always be infinitely happy, it seems to me that there is not any thing, in time, or eternity, which can hinder me from being infinitely happy, since my happiness is in him alone.

Father la Chaise\* was much prejudiced against me; for he had been told that I was deep in errors; that I had retracted some of them, but still retained many. A friend of mine urged me to write to him, telling me, "I should not wait for God to do every thing for me, without doing myself what was proper; for that would be to tempt God." Out of complaisance then, without the least hope of any good arising from it, I wrote to him a true account of myself, of the counterfeit letter, and the falsehoods reported of me: letting him know that I could prove the truth of what I had written, if he would admit it. I could never find that this letter produced any good effect, but rather the reverse. The Archbishop assured him that I was very criminal; and to prove it the better, pretended to be willing to

\* A Jesuit, and Confessor to the King of France.

do me a favour. He sent a certain Bishop privately, to solicit the Prioress to get me to write a handsome letter of submission, in which I should declare that I was criminal, and had made some retraction ; assuring me that if I wrote such a letter I should be immediately discharged.

I forgot to tell that, a month before this, the Official (with the Doctor) came to me. He proposed to me, in the presence of the Prioress, that if I would consent to the marriage of my daughter, as above hinted, I should be set free in less than eight days. I answered him, " that I would not buy my liberty at the price of sacrificing my daughter ; that I was content, as long as it should please the Lord, to continue in prison." He replied, " the King would not use violence in the case ; but he desired it." I said, " the King was too just to act otherwise." And yet a few days after, Father la Chaise was told that I had said, " the King would have me kept in prison till I consented to my daughter's marriage, and that the Archbishop had told the same to my children's guardian." They said, " I had invented this, that I was a state criminal, and ought to be closely locked up again." But before that, they made a fresh attempt to get me to write the letter demanded, after which they said I should be delivered. I knew it to be a snare ; that they had no mind to deliver me, but to have a clear proof against me, to imprison me for the rest of my life, and that this was what they wanted.

## CHAPTER VII.

*New falsehoods invented, and spread, to prejudice both the King and people in general against her. Through her close imprisonment she falls dangerously ill.*

SOON after, the Official and the Doctor came to tell the Prioress that I must be closely locked up. She represented to them that the chamber I was in was small, having an opening to the light or air, only on one side, through which the sun shone all the day long; and that, being the month of July, it must soon be my death. They paid no regard thereto. She asked why I must be thus closely locked up, They said, "I had committed horrible things, in her house. even within the last month, and had scandalized the Nuns." She protested the contrary, and assured them the whole community had received great edification from me, and could not but admire my patience and moderation. But it was all in vain: and the poor woman could not refrain from tears at a forgery so remote from the truth.

They then sent for me, and told me, "I had done base things in the last month." I asked what things? They would not tell me. I said then, "that I would suffer as long and as much as it should please God; that this affair was begun on forgeries against me, and so it continued.—That God was witness of every thing." The Doctor told me, "To take God for a witness in such things was a crime." I replied, "Nothing in the world could hinder me from having recourse to God." I then retired, and was shut up more closely than at first: and because there was no key, they fastened the chamber door with a piece of wood, or bar across it. I had an interior joy at this new humiliation. Oh what pleasure, my supreme Lord, to be for thee in the most abject condition.

The guardian of my children went to see the Archbishop,

and asked him for what cause I was made so close a prisoner, since he had lately told him I was justified. He answered, "You, sir, who are a Judge, know that ten indictments may fail of condemning, and that one may be found which may absolutely do it." "What new thing then, my Lord, said the Counsellor, has my cousin done?" "What, said he, do you not know? after having declared she was innocent, she has in this last month, with tears, and as it were by force, written a retraction, wherein she acknowledges that she has fallen into error, and hatched wicked sentiments; that she has been guilty of all she has been accused of; that she curses the day and hour wherein she became acquainted with Father la Combe." The Counsellor mistrusted it was a forgery. He desired to see it, with my examinations. The Archbishop told him, "It was not to be seen. The affair was the King's." The Counsellor to be the better assured, came hither to enquire whether I had written and signed any thing. The Prioress assured him that neither the Official nor Director had come hither for four months past, except when they came to propose the marriage of my daughter, when the Counsellor was present. I had written nothing all that time, except at the desire of the Prioress, a few lines to the Archbishop, wherein I reminded him, "that his Official had told me, before Easter, that I should not remain here above ten days; that that time was now greatly multiplied, and that I therefore now desired my liberty, as my temporal concerns needed it." Of this letter the Prioress kept a copy. But it was no difficulty to that scrivener, who had written the first false letter, to write more of them.

It was then for these counterfeit letters, shewed to Father la Chaise, that I was now so closely shut up. Now reports were current that I was convicted of old crimes, and had committed new ones. This obtained such credit, that even in this house they began to entertain some doubts



about me; my friends again forsook and blamed me for the letter I had written to Father la Chaise. I said in myself, "None shall hereafter prevail on me to have recourse to the creatures. I will place all my hope in God only." Do then with me, Oh my Lord, what thou shalt please both for time and for eternity. Even my children's guardian, the Counsellor, changed now his regard towards me.

Father la Mothe had said I should be shut up, three days before it was done. He said also, "We hear that where Father la Combe is imprisoned, there is a commandant who favours him: but we shall cause him to be fastened up close." Father la Combe had been transferred to the isle of Oleron, where the commanders, touched with his virtue, respected him as a servant of God. The chief of them, filled with a love for the truth, wrote to Monsieur Châteauneuf, governor of the island, in his favour, requesting him to grant a mitigation to the rigour of his imprisonment. The Governor shewed this letter to the Archbishop, and he to Father la Mothe. And they concluded to remove him from thence into a desert island, which was done.

Before I was arrested, Monsieur ——— sent for a certain woman, and told her she must go to the Jesuits, and swear against me several things, which he told her: she said, she did not know me. "That makes no difference, said he, it must be done; and that his design was to ruin me." Hereupon she went to a virtuous Ecclesiastic who told her, "It was a falsehood; and a sin to do it." She then refused to do it. He tampered with another to get her to do it. She also excused herself. A Friar, against whom there were great subjects of complaint, to gain credit to himself, wrote against me: for they gained most who could write with greatest force against me.

I have a cousin in whom the Lord has begun a good work, and I hope he will perfect it in her. She residing

at St. Cyr, spoke in my favour to Madam Maintenon, and she to the King, whom she found exceedingly prejudiced against me: she could at that time do nothing for me. I was told, there was no hope. All my friends said, "My imprisonment was likely to be perpetual." I fell dangerously ill, being shut up in a place where the air was so hot, it seemed like a stove. They wrote to the Official hereupon, desiring him to order some help, and to permit somebody to enter my chamber to serve me. He returned no answer; and but for the Superior of the house, who thought he could not in conscience leave me to die without attempting some relief (and therefore ordered the Prioress to look after me) I should have died without succor. For when the Archbishop was spoken to about it, "Very sick," said he, at being shut up within four walls, after what she has done!" He would grant nothing, though the Counsellor applied to him for it. The Superior ordered a physician and surgeon to attend me. It was God who inspired him to do it; for had I not been thus attended, I must soon have died. Seldom I think has the like treatment been heard of. All Paris was let loose against me. My friends were afraid lest I should die; for by my death my memory would have been covered with reproach, and my enemies would have triumphed: but God would not yet suffer them to have that joy. After bringing me down, he was pleased to raise me up again.

In the time of the ancient law, there were several of the Lord's martyrs, who suffered for asserting and trusting in the one true God. In the primitive church of Christ, the martyrs shed their blood, for maintaining the truth of Jesus Christ crucified: but now there are martyrs of the Holy Spirit, who suffer for their dependence on it, for maintaining its reign in souls, and for being victims of the divine Will.

It is this spirit which "is to be poured out on all flesh,"

as saith the prophet Joel. The martyrs of Jesus Christ have been glorious martyrs, he having drank up the confusion of that martyrdom: but the martyrs of the Holy Spirit are martyrs of reproach and ignominy. The devil no more exercises his power against their faith or belief, but directly attacks the dominion of the Holy Spirit, opposing its celestial motion in souls, and discharging his hatred on the bodies of those whose minds he cannot hurt. Oh Holy Spirit, a Spirit of love, let me be ever subjected to thy will, and, as a leaf is moved before the wind, so let me by thy divine breath. As the impetuous wind breaks all that resists it, so break all that opposes thy empire, even the towering cedars, which stand in such opposition.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

*Madame Maintenon, having all her prejudices against Lady Guion removed, intercedes for her; and the King orders her to be set at liberty.*

THEY still strove hard to draw out of me some retractions, being not well enough satisfied with those which the scrivener had inserted in the counterfeit letter. They wanted them from myself, in order that they might serve for a proof of my guilt to posterity, a proof that they were in the right to imprison me, and to convince the world also, that it was with justice that they had caused Father la Combe to be imprisoned. They made use both of alluring promises and violent threats, to induce me to write that he was a deceiver. I answered that, however rigorous my imprisonment was, I was ready to die and even to mount the scaffold, sooner than to write any falsehood; that I was content to suffer whatever it should please God to order or permit; that they ought to shew my examinations, since I had therein told the truth, as I had solemnly promised to do.

As they saw they could draw nothing else from me, they forged an execrable letter, wherein they made me accuse myself of all sorts of crimes, even such as God has done me the favour to keep me ignorant of. They also therein made me own that Father la Combe had deceived me, and that I detested the hour in which I first knew him. Father la Mothe, seeing that people began to look upon him as the author of the persecution and imprisonment of Father la Combe, in order to disculpate himself in the eye of the public, wrote to him that I had accused him, that he had desired the Archbishop to shew him his examinations, that he had designed to pursue the affair, and to demand satisfaction for having imprisoned him. "But, says he, the Archbishop told me it was the King's affair, and none of my business." He published abroad that I had like to have ruined their house, wanting to bring them all to be Quietists. He bethought himself of another stratagem to prevent the King from ever knowing that he was the author of our persecutions.

The Archbishop, whose director he is, consulted him in a sham way, whether he could in conscience set me at liberty, because he was afraid lest Madam Maintenon would speak for me. He answered in such a manner as to make me appear guilty, and yet himself to be concerned in my behalf. "I think my Lord, replied he, (writing in a concerted letter,) that you may set my sister at liberty, notwithstanding all that is past; and I offer to engage to you that no inconvenience shall arise from it." This letter was shewed to the King, to let him see the probity of Father la Mothe, and to take away all suspicion of his inclination to persecute me: and yet, in spite of the consultation, they did not fail to speak out openly, that they did not think in their consciences that they could set me at liberty. They represented me to the King, so much the more criminal, as Father la Mothe was the more zealous in my behalf. A

Bishop, speaking about me one day, to one of my friends who endeavoured to defend me, said, "How would you have us think her innocent, when I know that her own brother, Father la Mothe, has been obliged out of zeal for the good of the church, and through a spirit of piety, to carry shocking memorials against his sister, and her Father confessor, to the Archbishop's palace?"

Though Father la Combe be under close confinement, we do not fail to communicate in God. Many spiritual persons, to whom the Lord has united me by the tie of maternity, experience the same communication, though in my absence, and find in this union the remedy or relief of their pains. Oh God, who hast chosen in this poor creature to erect the throne of thy goodness and severity, thou knowest that I pass over many things, either for want of remembering, or of knowing how to express them. I have said what I could, and that with the utmost sincerity and entire truth. Though I have been obliged to describe the procedure of those who persecute me, I have not done it out of resentment, since I love them at my heart, and pray for them, leaving to God the care of defending me, and delivering me out of their hands, without any movement of my own for it. I have apprehended and believed that God would have me write every thing sincerely, that his name may be glorified; that the things done in secret against his servants should one day be published on the house tops; for the more they strive to conceal them from the eyes of men, the more will God in his own time make them all manifest.

At present I experience two states, that of Christ crucified, and of his infant state, the one of daily crosses, very violent, without number or intermission; the other so child-like, simple and candid, that methinks if my soul were to be impressed any way, there could come nothing out of it but candor, innocence, submission and patience. Oh my

God, methinks, thou hast made of me a prodigy, a monument of thy goodness and wonderful works! There is wrought in me something of the original, which is communicated to me after a manner inexplicable, which nothing but experience can comprehend; and rare indeed is that experience. It is then to thee, O my Lord, that I render what I have written for thee.

Done this 22d of August 1688, aged forty years, in my prison, which I love and cherish, as I find it sanctified by my Lord.

It was thought I was about coming out of prison, and every thing seemed to tend toward it. But the Lord gave me a sense that, far from being willing to deliver me, their consultations were only laying new snares to ruin me more effectually, to make Father la Mothe known to the King, and esteemed by him. The 22d of August, I waked under an impression of Jesus Christ in an agony, seeing the counsel of the Jews against him. I knew that none but God could deliver me out of prison, and I was satisfied that he would do it one day by his own right hand, though ignorant of the manner, and leaving it wholly to himself.

My soul has long been in an entire independence on every thing which is not God. It wants not any creature; and if it were alone in the world, in its present state, it would be infinitely content, as it adheres to nothing under heaven. Nothing else but God occupies and fills it. This mortification of every desire, this inability of cleaving to any creature (I mean not of things necessary for the body) this perfect satisfaction exempted from every selfish wish, because it wants nothing, is the surest proof of the entire possession of God, who alone, as the sovereign good, can satisfy the whole soul.

One day, thinking why I could not invoke any of the saints, though united to them in God, it was put into my mind, that domestics had need of credit and intercessors,

while the spouse readily obtains every thing without asking any thing. He of his infinite goodness prevents her. Oh how little known is the Holy Author of all good ! They examine my actions. They cry out that I do not say over my chaplet, or beads, that I have no devotion for the Holy Virgin. Oh divine Mary, thou knowest how my heart is singly devoted to God, and the union which he has formed between us in himself. I can do nothing but what he directs, depending wholly on his will.

The Official, the Doctor, the Guardian of my children, and Father la Mothe, came together to speak to me about the marriage of my daughter. Father la Mothe, who heard all that passed, said not a word, except that he whispered to me (thinking thereby to screen himself from the disgrace of that malice wherewith he persecuted me) "that I was detained in this convent, only on account of the marriage of my daughter." I made him little answer, yet treated him in the most courteous and cordial manner that was possible ; our Lord granted me the favour of easily acting this way, through his love. They told Father la Mothe they were glad to see that I received him so well. He gave out that, while I shewed him exterior civilities, I had used him ill, and treated him with malignity. When I heard it, I could not but wonder that any man could invent such gross untruths.

God, who never forsakes those that trust in him, has done what he made me know he would do, by the hand of Madam Maintenon. It fell out in the manner I am going to relate. It shews the wonderful conduct of God, and and the care he takes of those who are wholly his, even when he appears the most to desert them.

My uncle had a daughter, a Canoness of sense and merit, who also had a young sister, and as Madam Maintenon had newly established a house for young ladies, whose fathers had been ruined in the King's service, this Canoness went

to present her little sister to Madam Maintenon, who liked her much, as she did also the good sense and conduct of the Canoness. She desired her to stay at least for some time, to give this house its beginning. My cousin was pleased to speak in my favour to Madam Maintenon, but found her so prejudiced against me by the current calumnies, that she had no hope of doing any thing for me there. She let me know it. I was quite content with the will of God, and was under a full persuasion in myself, that God would make use of Madam Maintenon for my enlargement.

Madam Miramion, who also looked on me as very criminal from the same cause, providentially came to the convent which I was in, having a great esteem for the Prioress. She asked her about me. Both the Prioress and the Nuns gave her such a character of me, and of my conversation and conduct, as astonished her. After her return, she spoke of me to Madam Maintenon with a good effect.

But what was yet more amazing, the Abbess, with whom I had placed that good young woman, who had cost me so many crosses at Gex, as well as because Father la Mothe wanted the money which I had assigned for her portion, which in part has caused the persecution I have suffered, came to Paris about business. Having occasion to treat with me about that portion, and being a relation of Madam Maintenon, she complained to her that the Archbishop would not allow her to speak to me. Hereupon Madam Maintenon spoke for me to the King, who ordered the Archbishop to set me at liberty, which both surprised and vexed him exceedingly. I admired the singular steps of the adorable conduct of divine Providence herein, since the same money, which had proved a source of crosses to me, was now made the means of my deliverance. This Abbess also gave Father la Mothe a fear, lest his under hand dealing against me should be discovered, in a letter which she wrote to him, wherein she expressed her high esteem of my virtue and of the pious life I had led.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Her enemies demand of her, before her release, several captious signatures, which she refuses. Her first acquaintance with Abbe Fenelon, afterwards Archbishop of Cambray.*

My enemies informed the King, that I could not come out of prison without the proper formalities. This was an act which they wanted me to sign, to shew that they had not been in the wrong, and to screen them from all the researches which afterward might be made into their conduct in my affair. The Official came about the beginning of October, telling me, "I must sign an act he had drawn up:" finding, on the perusal of it, sundry articles which I could by no means be free to sign, I let him know it. He disputed them with me one after another, now and then breaking out into violent passions, saying, "I should sign them or pay dearly for." He and the Doctor said, "If I signed what they demanded, they would presently open to me the door."

I have understood since, that one of my persecutors had obtained a power to send me two hundred leagues off, to a prison where I should have been likely never more to be heard of; it pleased God to put forth his hand to save me, when things were become desperate. When my children's guardian went to the Secretary for my *lettre de cachet*, or letter sealed and addressed to me, (after the King had given his order to set me at liberty) the Secretary asked if it was for that lady who was to be transferred.\* Oh, how it pleases God to overturn the designs of men! The Abbess, with the said guardian, then came and took me out of prison. They took me first to the Archbishop, out of form, to thank him. I ought indeed to do it for what he has made me suffer, as by it God has been glorified. Madam Miramion, Madam Maintenon, and others, were very

\* Removed to another prison.

glad to see me set at liberty. The Archbishop desired me to say nothing of what had passed.

Some days after my release having heard of the Abbe de F.\* my mind was taken up with him with much force and sweetness. It seemed to me that the Lord would unite him to me in a very intimate manner, beyond any other, and that of him there would be formed a spiritual filiation (or sonship) to me. I had an opportunity of seeing him the next day. I inwardly felt that this first interview did not satisfy him. I experienced something which made me want to pour out my heart into his ; but I did not find yet the due correspondence for it, which made me suffer much. Next morning I saw him again. We remained in silence together for some time, till the cloud was dissipated ; but he was not yet as I desired him to be. Eight whole days I suffered on his account, after which I found myself united to him without any obstacle : and ever since, this union has increased after a manner pure and ineffable. My soul seemed to be joined to his in the bond of divine love, as was that of Jonathan to David. The Lord has given me a view of the great designs he has upon this person, and how dear he is to him.

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#### CHAPTER X.

##### *Of her inward condition, or Apostolic state.*

I have thought of writing no more of what regards my interior state, not having words to express it, being so perfectly separated from all that can fall under sentiment, expression, or human conception.

I shall only say that, after being raised up again, I found in myself, some years before my being put into what is called the Apostolic state, or mission for the help of others, all selfishness consumed in the purgatory I had passed through.

\* Abbe de Fenelon.

I found myself in a felicity like that of the blessed. Nothing here below touched me. At present I see not any thing on earth which can give me pain in regard to myself.

The happiness of such a soul can never be comprehended without experience! Those who die in being employed in thus helping their neighbour, die in the supreme felicity, though loaded with exterior crosses.

When it pleased God to honour me with his mission, he shewed me that the true father in Jesus Christ, the Apostolic pastor, ought like him to suffer for men, to bear their infirmities, to pay their debts, to be clothed with their weaknesses. He inclines the heart to what he demands, imprinting on it words like these, "I was happy, I possessed glory, I was God: but I quitted it all, and subjected myself to pain, contempt, ignominy, and punishment. I became a man to save men. If thou art willing to finish *what is behind of my suffering*, and that I form in thee an extension of my quality of Redeemer, thou must consent to lose the happiness thou enjoyest, to be subject to weaknesses and miseries, to bear the infirmities of those with whom I shall entrust thee, to pay their debts, and in short, to be exposed not only to their interior pangs, from which (as to thyself,) thou hast been delivered, but to all the most violent persecutions. If I had continued in my private life, I had never suffered any persecution. None are persecuted but such as are employed in the help of souls."

He shewed me that he called me not, as some had thought, to gain exterior proselytes to the church, but singly to the propagation of his own good spirit. He does not so much design me for the first conversion of sinners, as to make those, who are touched with a right desire, to enter into perfect conversion. Since God has been pleased to bestow on me part of the Apostolic state, what have I not suffered? And yet my love for those souls, instead of desiring to be freed from it, has increased in proportion to my

increase of suffering for them, even till their entire purification. Then the union, which has often been covered with clouds, becomes like a clear air, every where penetrated with the light of the sun. As to the souls which are the most consummate in the love of God, living among men, their exterior is covered with apparent weaknesses, which (like a poor skin) hide infinite treasures from the view of others, and tend to save them from being lost.

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#### CHAPTER XI.

*She retires into a community. Marriage of her daughter. Conferences with Abbe Fenelon. Edifying visits at St. Cyr. Conferences with two noted citizens of Paris.*

AT my coming out of St. Mary's, I entered into the community of Madam Miramion. My enemies, not yet tired of plotting against me, told me it was more proper for me to enter into a private house. This was to set on foot new forgeries, as before. When they saw that, with all their endeavours for it, they could not prevail, they wrote to Madam Miramion, assuring her that they saw me go into bad houses in the suburb S. Marceau; and that I held assemblies. Father la Mothe was the author of these letters. Madam Miramion, who knew that I had all this time kept my bed in the fever, with an imposthume in the eye, which was dressed every day, herself generally being present at the dressing, was very much provoked at such a procedure. Father la Mothe came to see her, to confirm what he had written, and to add thereto other calumnies, of things which he said I had done within eight days last past; she fell upon him sharply for the blackness of his accusations, assuring him that she believed all that had been told her, of the flagrant malignities with which he had all along pursued me, having such a manifest reason so to do, as she was a witness that for three months past I had kept my bed.

Seeing himself so ill received here, he tried to set other engines to work. He complained every where that I had caused him to be ill treated by Madam Miramion, though I did not know any thing of what had passed, till some time after it, when, upon my recovery, she told me it, and shewed me his letters.

During my late illness, with the great pains of my eye, God gave me great patience. In all my maladies I have been endued with wonderful patience. I only accuse myself of letting it too much appear, as it served to feed my mind with the notice and admiration of those about me: as there are hidden corners in things which appear virtues, that harbour selfish regards, which cannot escape the penetrating eye of pure love.

My daughter was married at the house of Madam Miramion.\* I then thought myself obliged, on account of her extreme youth, to live with her; where I continued two years and a half. While I was there, my enemies were ever forging one thing or other against me. When I was with my daughter in the country, they charged me with instilling my notions into the country people: if I was in town, they charged me with visiting people whom I knew nothing of. All these things, concurring with my own inclination to a retired life, determined me to write to the Prioress of the Benedictines at Montargis, to inform her that I had a mind to spend the rest of my days with her, unknown to every body but herself, and to see nobody but her alone. We had agreed on every article, and I sent thither my furniture. She spoke of it to the Archbishop, and he did not keep the secret.

Both my friends and my enemies, (if we may call by that name those to whom we do not wish any harm) opposed it; the former not willing to lose me, and the latter

\* To Monsieur Louis Nicolas Fouquet, Count de Vaux, &c. son of the famous Monsieur Fouquet, superintendent of the King's finances.—EDITH'S NOTE.

wanting a better opportunity of undoing me, thinking also that my leading such a life would give the lie to all the strange stories which they had invented and spread of me. They then besought the Archbishop to prevent my reception there, which accordingly he did. I then apprehended that I was going to be exposed to violent hurricanes. I cheerfully submitted to make an entire sacrifice of myself to God, accounting myself happy in paying with such light pains what I am indebted to his justice, and honoured in being yet more conformable to the image of his son.

The family into which my daughter was married, being of the number of Abbe Fenelon's friends, I had the opportunity of often seeing him at our house. We had some conversations on the subject of a spiritual life, in which he made several objections to my experiences therein. I answered them with my usual simplicity, which gained upon him as I found. As the affairs of Molinos at that time made a great noise, the plainest things were distrusted, and the terms used by mystic writers exploded. But I so clearly expounded every thing to him, and so fully solved all his objections, that nobody became better convinced of my sentiments than he; which has since laid the foundation of that persecution he has suffered, as his answers to the Bishop of Meaux evidently shew to all that have read them without prejudice.

I now took a little private house, to follow the inclination I had for retirement: where I sometimes had the pleasure of seeing my family and a few particular friends. I often went to St. Cyr. Certain young women of that house having informed Madam Maintenon, that they found in my conversation something which attracted them to God, she encouraged me to continue my instructions to them; and by the agreeable change in some of them, with whom before she had not been well pleased, she found she had no reason to repent it. She then treated me with much

respect; and for three or four years after, while this lasted, I received from her every mark of esteem and confidence. But that very thing afterward drew on me the most severe persecution. The free entrance I had into the house, and the confidence which some young ladies of the court, distinguished for their rank and piety, placed in me, gave no small uneasiness to the people who had persecuted me. The Directors took umbrage at it, and under pretext of the troubles I had had some years before, and of Quietism, which they said was making a great progress, they engaged the Bishop of Chartres, Superior of St. Cyr, to represent to Madam Maintenon that, by my particular conduct, I troubled the order of the house, and that the young women in it were so attached to me, and to what I said to them, that they no longer hearkened to their Superiors. She caused me to be respectfully told of it. I then went no more to St. Cyr. I answered the young ladies who wrote to me, no more but by letters unsealed, which passed through the hands of Madam Maintenon.

[Here she gives a relation of one Monsieur Nicolas, who had often exclaimed against her, without knowing her, with whom she had a conference on her little book, or Method of Prayer, whom she fully satisfied; he reading it over from the beginning to the end, and she removing all his misapprehensions and scruples; after him Monsieur Boileau, (Dean of the Archbishoprick of Sens, and brother of the famous French poet of that name) who told her, that, if the explanations which she had given him, of certain passages, had been inserted in that work, it would not have been so much decried as a dangerous book, but instead of it might be good and useful; to which she answered:]

"I never had an intention of publishing that book. It was only written for the private instruction of one of my friends, who had desired it of me, in consequence of some conversations on the subject. Therefore I could neither

foresee that they would cause it to be printed, nor put such constructions upon it as he had laid open to me ; but that I should be ever ready to give the explanations necessary to remove all exceptions which might be made to any part of it."

Some days after, I sent him an explication, pursuant to a promise I had made him. He appeared well pleased with it, and pressed me to get the little book re-printed with this preface to it :\* But I told him I intended no more to print that little book, nor any thing about it, having already given and received so much trouble from it, with some other reasons which made him approve my resolution ; and we parted mutually satisfied with each other in this conversation.

Soon after I fell sick. The physicians, after trying in vain the usual methods of cure, ordered me to repair to the waters of Bourbon. My lackey had been prevailed upon to give me poison. After taking it, I suffered such exquisite pains, that without speedy succour, I should have died in a few hours. The lackey immediately ran away, and I have never seen him since. When I was at Bourbon, the water which I threw up burned like spirits of wine. I had no thought of being poisoned, till the physicians of Bourbon, on throwing the said water into the fire, assured me of it. The waters had but little effect. I suffered for above seven years after it. Since that time three or four attempts have been made to poison me : but God has preserved me from it through his mercy, and the presentiments which he gave me of it. The aforesaid Monsieur Nicolas, having little else to do, and willing to oblige a party, wrote against my little book, which we had read over together, and with which he had appeared so well satisfied. The quotations in it were not right. A friend of his, with whom I had no

\* This preface is among the spiritual works of Lady Guion, printed in the year 1712. It is entitled, *A short apology for the Short Method of Prayer.*



acquaintance, a man of reputation and of merit, struck with its want of solidity, wrote a refutation of it. He did not print this refutation ; but it still subsists, being in the hands of one of his friends, I let it all fall, without thinking of justifying myself.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*She enters upon a more retired way of life ; yet finds it an insufficient shelter from calumnies and persecution.*

THE Directors, joined by many others, stirred up such a general ferment, such a spirit of violence and bitterness all around against me, as made me wish to live retired, which accordingly I put in execution, living in such a solitude as not to let even any of my own family know where I was, but Monsieur Fouquet, my son-in-law's uncle. I had need of a person of well known probity, both to receive for me the little annuity I had reserved for myself, and to be a witness of my life and conduct. But my retreat did not produce the effect intended by it. They now raised a new forgery, that I was spreading the poison of Quietism in more distant parts. They set to work a number of pretended devotees, to go from Confessor to Confessor, to accuse themselves of crimes, which they said they had been drawn into from imbibing my principles.

God kept me at that time in such a disposition of sacrifice, that I was quite resigned to suffer every thing, and to receive from his hand all that might befall me, since for me to offer in any way to vindicate myself, would be only beating the air. When the Lord is willing to make any one suffer, he permits even the most virtuous people to be blinded toward them ; and I may confess that the persecution of the wicked is but little when compared with that of the servants of God, deceived and animated with a zeal which

they think right. Many of these were now, by the artifices made use of, greatly imposed upon in regard to me. I was represented to them in an odious light, as a strange creature. Since then I must, oh my Lord, be conformable to thee, to please thee, I set more value on my humiliation, and on seeing myself condemned of every body, than if I saw myself on the summit of honour in the world. How often have I said, even in the bitterness of my heart, that I should be more afraid of one reproach of my conscience, than of the outcry and condemnation of all men !

A woman, who had artfully gained great credit, persisted continually in saying, "that I ought to be shut up in close confinement, for I ruined every body that came near me." Thou knowest, oh Lord, that those whom I am said to have ruined, are full of true love for thee. At this time it seemed as if every one with emulation invented new fables against me. It was only who could make the most libels. He who invented them the best was most encouraged.— They believed things incredible, which were against me, and refused to hearken, or give any credit to persons of the greatest respectability, who knew me from my youth, when they spoke in my favour, even such as they would have readily believed on any other occasion.

To cast a suspicion on what they called my doctrine, they thought they must decry my morals. They omitted nothing to accomplish this. Having persuaded the Bishop of Chartres to believe it, by endless stories of the pretended danger of the church, he then assured Madam Maintenon, and those of the court whom he knew to be my friends, that it was necessary for them to abandon me ; because I was both wicked myself, and capable of inspiring them with wicked sentiments. As to Madam Maintenon, the part she had taken in my release from St. Mary's, my conversations, my letters, the testimony of me given by her friends, in whom she had the greatest confidence, made her

suspend her judgment for some time : but at last she yielded to the reiterated instances of the Bishop of Chartres, and some others whom he employed in the direction at St. Cyr. With all his industry he could not in like manner succeed with some illustrious persons, who, having been witnesses of my conduct for several years past, knew me by themselves, and knew also all the different springs which had been made to play, in order to drown or destroy me effectually. I owe them that justice to make it known, that at this time they got the authority of the King to be employed to protect me from so many assaults of injustice : they caused a memorial to be drawn up, sufficient to dispose him in my favour, giving him an account of my conduct both past and present. Madam Maintenon was to support it with her testimony. She had the goodness to communicate it to me.

I was uneasy at it, not thinking that God would have me justified by that channel. I therefore demanded of them, that they would leave me to all the rigours of his justice, whatever they might be. They paid the due deference to my request. The memorial then, which had been already given in, was withdrawn ; they took the course of silence which they have since continued, being unable to do any thing more in my favour, by reason of the violent prejudice and general rage against me.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

*The Duke of Chevreuse brings her acquainted with the Bishop of Meaux. She puts into his hand all her writings, and clears up to him many of the difficulties which he had pretended to find therein.*

SOME of my friends judged it proper for me to go to see the Bishop of Meaux. He had read my *Short Method* and *Canticles*, eight or ten years ago, and had expressed his ap-

probation of them. I therefore went. But, oh my Lord, how is every thing, done out of human consideration and regard, turned into shame, confusion, and pain ! and how subject to the grossest mistakes is what we see not in thy light, not duly waiting for thy discovery thereof !

One of my worthy friends, the Duke of Chevreuse, brought the Bishop to my house. Our conversation fell upon the Short Method. That Prelate said, he had formerly read it and the Canticles, which, he said, he liked well. What I say here is only to give a faithful relation of what passed, as I have been required to do. The Duke afterward gave him *The Torrents*, on which he made some remarks, not of things to be blamed, but needing explanation. The Duke of Chevreuse had the goodness to be always present at our conferences. He presented him, by my consent, with the history of my life, which pleased him so much, that he wrote to the Duke, "That he found therein such an unction as he had rarely done in other books, and that he had spent three days in reading it, with an impression of the presence of God on his mind all that time."

I forgot to tell that the Bishop desired me to keep it a secret, that he came to see me. As I have always inviolably kept the secrets of my greatest enemies, I took care not to fail therein to him. The reason he gave for it was, that he did not stand well with the Archbishop of Paris : and yet he went himself to tell him what he had desired me to keep silent. My silence and his discourses have been the source of all the persecutions which I have suffered.

I proposed to the Bishop to examine my writings. He accepted the proposal. I then put them into his hands, not only those which have been printed, but all my commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. I had sent them before to the Official by a maid ; but she, fearing they would be lost, distributed them among a number of scribes, who took a co-

py of them, which was now given to the Bishop of Meaux. To peruse them all was a laborious task for him. He demanded four or five months, to have leisure to read and examine them all, which he did with much exactness, at his country seat, whither he had retired, to be the less interrupted. To manifest the more confidence in him, and to shew him the innermost of my heart, I lent him the history of my life, wherein my most secret dispositions are set down with much simplicity. I desired of him the like secrecy on it, as in a confession ; and he fully promised it. He read the whole with attention ; and, at the end of the time he had demanded, put himself in a condition to lay open to me his difficulties, and to hearken to my explanations.

This was at the beginning of the year 1694. He desired to see me at the house of one of his friends. There, after dinner, we had a conference, but far from being kept so secret as it should have been. From thence we went to a certain community in that neighbourhood, where they used their utmost endeavours to prejudice him against me. That they had effected it, manifestly appeared, when he returned and spoke to me. He was no more the same man. He brought all his extracts, and a memorial containing above twenty articles, to which all his difficulties were reduced. The Lord assisted me, insomuch that I satisfied him in every thing which related to the tenets of the church, and to the purity of the doctrine. But there were some places to which I could not reconcile him. As he spoke too fast, and scarce gave me time to explain my sentiments to him, it was not in my power to convince him in some of the articles, as I had done in others. We parted very late. I came away under such an oppression, that I was sick after it for several days. I wrote to him afterward several letters, in which I explained to him, in the best manner I could, the difficulties he could not get over ; and I receiv-

ed one from him of above twenty pages, wherein it appeared that he had been put to a stand from the newness of the subject, and the little knowledge he had of the interior ways of the Spirit, of which none are able to judge but from experience.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

*A farther account of her conferences with the Bishop of Meaux. Observations on her own disposition.*

WHEN I speak or write of things, they appear to me as clear as the day. After that, they are like things which I never knew. They pass away, and thenceforward are lost to me. This caused one of my greatest difficulties in speaking to the Bishop of Meaux. However, having written only out of obedience, I was easy about the fate of it, leaving it entirely to the disposal of Providence, rather chusing to submit than contend about the vindication of any part therein. Beside my own errors, owing to haste, there were also others of the transcribers which greatly clouded the sense.

He spoke to me about *the woman in the Revelations*, (Rev. xii. 1. &c.) as if I had pretended to be *that woman*. I answered that our Lord was pleased to compare his servants to many things, which, in strict propriety, belong only to himself. When what Solomon says of Wisdom, is, in our church, applied to the holy virgin, it is plain that Solomon meant only the divine and eternal Wisdom. I never desire to stick to any thing but God only. I doubt not but my own weakness may have been too much mixed with the sacred intelligences of his pure light. But can the dirt of the ground tarnish or injure the sun? Such mixture may shade the light of truth, but cannot hurt it. It remains for ever perfect. What I desired of the Bishop of Meaux

was to judge of me rather by the feelings of his heart than the reasonings of his head. I thought that God, who formerly made an ass speak, might also make a woman speak, though of myself I knew little more of what I have spoken, than even Balaam's ass. The Bishop owned that he had never read the mystic writers. The proving path of faith in God (in order to see his designs concerning us, and to be willing to submit to them) appeared to the Bishop only the jargon of a distempered brain. To him it was all unintelligible and intolerable. I never set up for things extraordinary. I contributed to the reign of God; not by shining things, but by gaining souls through my reproaches; suffering willingly with Christ, and for his worthy name's sake.

The Bishop rallied me, not a little, on what I had said of my Apostolic state. I meant that it is a state which none ought of themselves to intrude into; none but they whom God calls, having by his Spirit prepared them for it: but some, who have been as it were ravished with the first fruits of the divine unction, from the Lord of all, have felt such a longing desire to give a share of their grace to every body, and to diffuse what was given only for themselves, that they have made too free with the holy oil, poured into their lamps; till, like the foolish virgins, they have had none of it left: whereas the wise watchfully keep their oil, till by the light thereof they are introduced into the bridegroom's chamber. Then they may give of their oil, because the Lamb is the light which illuminates them.

By looking into the Ecclesiastical histories for ages past, we may see that God hath sometimes made use of laymen, and of women, to instruct, edify, and to help souls in their progress to perfection: and I think one of the reasons of God's acting thus, is, that his glory may not be given to any other, but to himself only. For this purpose, *he has chosen the weak things of this world, to confound such as are mighty.* 1 Cor. i. 27.

Jealous of the attributes which men pay to other men, which are only due to himself, he has made a paradox of such persons, that he alone may have the glory of his own works. I pray God with my whole heart, sooner to crush me utterly, with the most dreadful destruction, than to suffer me to take the least honour to myself, of any thing which he has been pleased to do by me for the good of others. I am only a poor NOTHING. God is all-powerful. He delights to operate, and exercise his power on NOTHING.

The first time that I wrote a history of myself, it was very short. In it I had particularized my faults and sins, and said little of the favours of God. I was ordered to burn it, and to write another, and in it to omit nothing, any way remarkable, that had befallen me. I did it. It is a crime to publish the secrets of the King; but it is a good thing to declare the favours of the Lord our God, and to magnify his mercies the more by the meanness of the subject on which he confers them. If herein I have failed, the fire will try and purify it all. When I first gave myself to the Lord it was without any reserve: and for every thing of mine, which I only did out of obedience, I am content with whatever may be permitted or ordained, as best in the case. It is my consolation that God is not less great, perfect, or happy, for any mistakes or errors of mine. My soul can do nothing else but love him, and repose itself in his love. It seems that what proceeds from me flows from that source: and since *as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God*, a humble hope attends me that I appertain to his family. I collect here all that I can remember of that examination of the Bishop, that I may not do it twice over. I thought my director would remove all the improper terms, and would amend whatever he should find not well expressed. I had rather die than deviate from the sentiments of the church. I have ever been willing to disavow and condemn whatever I may have happened to say, or write, which may appear in any respect contrary thereto.



## CHAPTER XV.

*The Bishop offers her a certificate. She acknowledges his kindness, but does not accept of it. Fresh calumnies against her gaining ground, she writes by the Duke of Beauvilliers to Madam Maintenon to request an appointment of commissioners for her examination ; but without effect. Death of one of her best friends.*

THIS conference being ended, I now thought only of a retreat, as the Bishop had advised me : I mean, no more to see any body, as I had begun to do for a considerable time past. I wrote him some letters, to explain such things as he had not given me time for in our conference. I addressed them to the Duke of Chevreuse, through whose hands they all passed. And he was careful enough to procure me answers to them. The Bishop's vivacity, and the hard terms which he sometimes made use of, had persuaded me that he looked on me as a person fallen into egregious mistakes, or under a delusion. On this footing I wrote to the Duke of Chevreuse, who shewed him my letter, in which I thanked him for the great pains he had taken on my account. The Bishop answered, that the difficulties on which he had insisted, did not regard either the faith or doctrine of the church ; that he indeed thought differently from me on the articles to which he had objected ; but he did not think me the less a catholic for that : and that if, for my consolation, and that of my friends, I desired a certificate of his sentiments, he was ready to give me one, by which it might appear that he had found nothing in me but what was catholic : and had therefore administered to me the sacraments of the church. I thanked him for his offer, and desired him to be told, " that, having only wanted to see him for my own particular instruction, and for the satisfaction of some of my friends, who might be uneasy at the great commotions which had been raised, I was satisfied with

the testimony which he was willing to give them and me; and that I would do what was in my power to conform to what he had prescribed: but that the sincerity, which I made a profession of, did not allow me to hide from him, that there were some things in which I could not obey him, how great a desire soever I had to do it." After which I broke off all commerce with the world, yet letting it be known, that, whenever I should be called to give an account of my faith, I would come at the first signal, which should be sent me by a relation, who managed my temporal concerns.

The aforesaid Monsieur Fouquet was the only one to whom I confided the place of my retreat. At the end of several months he wrote to me, "that the change of Madam Maintenon in regard to me was now public; that they who had persecuted me before, now kept no measures; that there was a terrible outcry against me, and stories circulated, wherein, after a very base and unworthy manner, they attacked my morals." Hereupon I wrote to Madam Maintenon such a letter as I thought might have been sufficient to remove her prejudice, or at least to put her, as well as the public, in the way of knowing the truth. I wrote to her, "That so long as they accused me only of my devotion to Almighty God, and of teaching others the same holy exercise, I was content to continue retired. But as I was now informed that public fame charged me with crimes, I thought I owed it to the church, to my family, and myself, that the truth should be known; that I only desired that justice which was granted to the worst criminals, viz. to make out my process, to appoint commissioners for my examination, half churchmen and half laymen, of a known probity and unbiassed; for probity alone was not sufficient in an affair wherein calumny had prejudiced an infinite number of people. I added that, if this favour were granted, I would repair to any prison which

she or the King should be pleased to order, with a maid who had served me now fourteen years; and that, when she should know the truth, I had some hope that she would think me not altogether unworthy of the marks of esteem with which she had formerly honoured me."

I addressed this letter to the Duke of Beauvilliers, who gave it into her own hands. She told him, "She had never believed any of the reports which were propagated against my morals, which she believed were very good; that it was my doctrine which was bad; that in justifying my morals, there was room to fear they would give a free course to my sentiments, and in some sort authorise them; that it was best to clear up first what related to my doctrine, after which all the rest would fall of itself."

At this time my dear friend and relation, Monsieur Fouquet departed this life. He was a true servant of God, and a faithful friend. His loss would have been very sensible to me, under my present circumstances, if I had not had more regard to the happiness he was gone to enjoy, than to the succours which I found myself deprived of, by his removal. I had an impression on my mind that he would depart within eight days, and so I wrote to him.\* Great part of this time he was so easy, and seemed to be growing so much better, that those about him said, "I was a false prophetess." But one morning, near the expiration of the time, my maid going to inquire about him, found he was dead, though the day before he seemed better than he had been. When I heard it, I felt nothing but joy on his account; I was so certain of his happiness. And though I lost the best friend I had in the world, and who might have been so useful to me in the tempest with which I was threatened, yet the sense of his felicity, and of the accomplishment of the will of God, left no room for any grief with me.

\* This letter is the 228th in the first volume of her letters, page 418.

I knew I lost a friend who feared nothing, and would have served me even at the expence of his life. I should rather have envied him than wept, if the love of the will of God had not prevailed, above every thing, in my heart.—Some days after, I imagined I saw him as when he was alive. Knowing he was dead, I asked him how he fared in the other world. With a joyful countenance he answered, “Those who do the will of God are accepted of him.” I thought this little digression would not be displeasing to those for whom I have written it, as most of them knew him well. Now to return to my own affairs.

I was much concerned at Madam Maintenon’s refusal to appoint commissioners to examine me. I knew well that they wanted to take from me the only resource, by which I could make known my innocence, and to make a new examination, only to impose on the public, and to render my condemnation the more authentic. They intended thereby to stop the mouths of my friends; for though they said nothing to justify me, their silence in so universal a decry, and their refusal to condemn me like the rest, sufficiently shewed that they thought differently of me, and peaceably suffered what they could not prevent. I left to God whatever he should please to order. I was not ignorant who they were that opposed the offer I had made. They were afraid lest my innocence should be known, and all the engines discovered which they had set to work to sully it. But, thanks to God, I have never had any desire to accuse any body, not any of the worst of my persecutors. My views are not so low. There is a sovereign hand which I adore and love, who turns the malice of some, and the zeal without knowledge of others, to carry on his own work, for my more thorough death to every thing beside himself alone; and to snatch away from my friends, certain imperfect, and too human supports. As Madam Maintenon had taken a change, there was little to hope

from her attendant ministers : but God does not need the mediation of any body. He builds on wrecks. We must have a care of going into the temptation of judging of the will of God by the apparent success of things. Men form ideas in their heads of means by which they think God will be glorified. When he destroys those means, they give up the point. God will never be glorified but by his Son, and whatever has the nearest relation, or the most conformity to his Son.

But to pass for a heretic! will some say. What can I do in it? I have written simply my thoughts. I submit them with all my heart. Some say, "They are capable of a good or a bad sense." I know that I have written them in a good, and am ignorant of the bad. Since I wrote them, I have ever been ready to burn whatever was judged likely to do the least hurt. It suffices for myself, that my own heart bears testimony of my faith, since they will allow no public testimony. But they want to corrupt my morals, in order to corrupt my faith. I am willing to justify my morals, in order to justify the faith by which they are produced. If they condemn me, they cannot thereby take me out of the bosom of the church, my true mother, since I condemn all that she condemns, in my writings. I cannot confess my having had thoughts which I never had, nor having committed crimes, which, far from committing them, I never knew : for that would be to lie against the Holy Ghost.

The way agreed upon, in which they treated me, (saying nothing of the passionate manner, which was without example) was quite contrary to the very spirit of the gospel. They should have asked me, what had been my sentiment in writing such and such things, then shewed me the abuse which might be made of them. In such case I would have heartily condemned them, and desired my examiners to commit to the flames, however good any of them might be,

what any person might make a bad use of. Ought they not then to have done me justice, condemning my writings, but not myself?

Being now determined to retire out of the way of giving offence to any, I wrote to some of my friends, and bade them a last farewell; not knowing whether I were to be carried off by the indisposition which I then laboured under, which had been a constant fever, for forty days past, or to recover from it. I wrote further, "That I prayed God to finish in them the good work he had begun; that, if I had contributed any good to them, by his grace, he would not be unmindful to preserve in them that which was his own, viz. the renunciation of themselves, to bear the cross, to follow Jesus Christ, with hearts filled with his pure love; that they might judge it was for them, and not for myself, that I deprived myself of all commerce with them, by whom I had often been much edified; that now, if I stayed, I might hurt them without designing it, and be an occasion of trouble and scandal to them; that I therefore desired them to look upon me as a thing forgotten."

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#### CHAPTER XVI.

*Violence rising on every side, she perceives that some others are aimed at beside herself, particularly Abbe Fenelon, of which she apprises him. The Bishop of Meaux and Chalons, with Monsieur Tronson, are agreed upon to examine her writings.*

I BEGAN to perceive that some others were aimed at, beside myself, in the persecution stirred up. I was too inconsiderable an object, for so many violent motions and agitations: but as those whom our enemies had in view were out of their reach, by themselves, they meant to attack them by the esteem they had manifested for a person so cried down as I was, and whom they were still endeavour-

ing to render yet more odious. I had long before apprized the Abbe Fenelon of the change of Madam Maintenon in regard to him, and of the persons who pretended to pay him the most respect, and to place the greatest confidence in him, without his ever being willing to believe it. He still thought I was mistaken, and I waited in peace till God should undeceive him by other ways. The event has since justified my presentiments. Those same persons have persecuted him violently. They have shared that favour and confidence with the King, which he might have still kept himself, if he had been less devoted to God, and more fond of those objects, of which most part of men are so greedy.

What now gave me most pain, was, that she judged of others by the impression she had against me. All my intelligences, beside some dreams I had had, (for God often, by that way, has made known to me a part of the things which have since befallen me) made me resolve to live unknown, waiting for the event of Providence. If I could have been sensible to any thing, it would have been to the pain of others, and to the afflictions which I might have caused them, if I could have looked at them any otherwise than in the will of God, in which the greatest afflictions become the greatest benefits. Though, through the mercy of God, I have not committed the evils which some charge me with, yet I have too often offended him otherwise, through my infidelities. He is so pure, that, after so many fires of tribulations, I yet behold myself impure in his most holy sight. I see, indeed, that his infinite goodness every day diminishes those impurities; for we are not impure, but by our attachments to other objects. A selfish desire, even to procure the glory of God, renders us unworthy of his making use of us for it. My worthy friends, I think, have too much faith to impute to any thing but Providence, what they have suffered since, and may yet

suffer. I should be quite willing to take on myself the load of all their sufferings. Let me, oh my God, be the *scape-goat*, charged with the iniquities of thy people. Spare them all, but spare not me. Thou knowest, oh my Lord, that I have sought neither my own glory, nor justification, in what I have done and desired. It was thy glory only which I have sought, and it was for them that I wanted to have justified myself, if it could have been done. Be then thyself their sanctification and their justification.

Soon after I heard that some persons at court, who had an affection for me, in concert with Madam Maintenon, had agreed to cause a new examination to be made of my writings, and to employ in it persons well known both for their knowledge and probity. The Duke de Chevreuse wrote to me, that he thought, as well as others of my friends, that it was the surest way to recover the minds of the people, and to remove their prejudices. It would have been so, if every one had proceeded in it with the same views and intentions. But it was a condemnation they wanted to assure, and to render it so authentic, that such as till then had continued persuaded of the sincerity and uprightness of my intentions, should not be able to hold up any longer, against a testimony so much the less suspected, as they had sought into matters to the bottom, every thing passing through their hands. I wrote that I was ever ready to render an account of my faith, desiring to be set right, if, contrary to my intention, any thing had escaped me, which was not conformable to sound doctrine.

This discussion appeared difficult to be made in Paris, because of the Archbishop, from whom, all parties agreed that it should be concealed. He would not have suffered it to be carried on, without him, in the heart of his own diocese; and with him they could not agree. Yet, during the course of that examination, the Archbishop, having in his custody a number of false memorials, which had been giv-



en him against me, sent me word that he would draw me out of all my troubles. He wanted to have the glory of it, and that no other person should intermeddle in it. Some of my friends would not consent to my going to him. The Archbishop resented it. He censured my books, which he had not done before, having been satisfied with the explanations which I had given, six or seven years before. My friends, with my consent, pitched upon the Bishop of Meaux, the Bishop of Chalons, and Monsieur Tronson, Superior of the house of St. Sulpitius ; but it appeared that the first named of these had promised Madam Maintenon my condemnation.

[She wrote them a long letter : mentioning in it her particular enemies, one of whom is the Curate of Versailles, who had formerly professed a high esteem for her, visited her often, declared his sentiments were the same with hers ; but of late he had imagined that she had drawn away the Countess of G. and the Dutchess of M. from under his direction. Hereupon she writes,] “ When these ladies, and others, were in the vanities of the world, when they patched and painted, and some of them were in the way to ruin their families by gaming, and profusion of expence in dress, nobody arose to say any thing against it ; they were quietly suffered to do it. When they have broken off from all this, then they cry out against me, as if I had ruined them. Had I drawn them from piety into luxury, they would not make such an outcry. The Dutchess of M. at her giving herself up to God, thought herself obliged to quit the Court, which was to her like a dangerous rock, in order to bestow her time on the education of her children, and the care of her family, which till then she had neglected. I beseech you therefore to gather all the memorials you can against me : and if I am found guilty of the things they accuse me of, I ought to be punished more than any other, since God has brought me to know him and love him, and I am well

assured that there is no communion between Christ and Belial."

I sent them at the same time my two little printed books, with my commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. I also, by their order, set about a work to facilitate their examination, and to spare them as much time and trouble as I could, which was to collect a great number of passages out of approved mystic writers, which shewed the conformity of my writings with those used by the holy penmen. It was a large work. I caused them to be transcribed by the quire, as I had written them, in order to send them to the three commissioners. I also, as occasion presented, cleared up the dubious and obscure places ; for, as I had written them at a time when the affairs of Molinos had not broke out, I used the less precaution in expressing my thoughts, not imagining that they would ever be turned into an evil sense. This work was entitled *the Justifications* ; it was composed in fifty days, and appeared to be very sufficient to clear up the matter. But the Bishop of Meaux would never suffer it to be read.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*The Bishop of Meaux endeavours to obtain the condemnation of Madam Guion. He forbids the Duke of Chevreuse to be present at the trial.*

I soon perceived the change of the Bishop of Meaux, and how much I was mistaken in the idea I had formed of him. Though with my friends he was very reserved in declaring his sentiments, he was not so with persons ill-disposed toward me. I had confided to him, as I have already said, the history of my life, under the seal of secrecy.—My most secret dispositions were set down in it. Nevertheless, I have heard that he had both shewed it to others, and been free in his strictures on it. He now insisted on

my producing it, though it had nothing to do in the examination which had been desired. I gave it to them. I wrote to his friend and mine, the Duke de Chevreuse, my thoughts about the Bishop of Meaux, and what room I had to conclude that he studied only how to condemn me : and, to have a sure witness of what should pass in this examination, I requested the Duke to be present at it. I also desired that they would proceed regularly ; and to every article, as they went along, affix its sentence, whether approved or condemned. This the Duke proposed to them. The Bishop of Chalons and Monsieur Tronson would have willingly consented to the proposal, as they entered into the affair with mildness and candour ; but the Bishop of Meaux was against it, and, being the ruling person, found means to hinder it from being done. He was no more the same man he had been six or seven years before ; for then he did not fail, notwithstanding his extreme vivacity, to be convinced of many things, which at first his prejudices had made him reject. He even appeared sometimes touched with certain truths, and to respect things which struck him, though he had not the experience of them ; but now he had a fixed point, from which he would not turn aside : and as he wanted to pass a sentence of condemnation with some éclat, to that he referred every thing which he thought capable of contributing to it. Some who had lived in an unbridled libertinism, had given a great handle to my persecution, by going from confessor to confessor, to declare they were now converted from all the horrors of Quietism, giving themselves the merit of a true conversion, and saying at the same time, that I adhered to those sentiments from which they had been reclaimed. These then were highly favoured, and left at full liberty of spreading all the poison of their bad principles, founded on a frightful and unbounded licentiousness. Some of them I have used my best endeavours to draw from that unhappy condition, when Prov-

idence put me within the reach of doing it ; and still I would gladly do it, if to gain one of them to God were to cost me the same persecution over again.

I perceived every day that the Bishop of Meaux was fixed in his intentions. Such a fixed disposition is an obstacle, almost insurmountable, to the light of truth. I had given clear explanations, at the first conference, on the questions propounded ; but nothing entered, he was so bent on the condemnation. The Bishop of Chalons, having at leisure examined my books and commentaries on the Scripture, consented to the proposal, which was made to him, to meet at Monsieur Tronson's country seat ; because, being infirm, and very much indisposed, he could not go out. I had requested as a favour, that the Duke of Chevreuse might be present, being the particular friend of those two prelates, through whose hands all had passed, and who had a perfect understanding of the matter in question, as well as of what had given rise to this examination. I desired also, that after having examined one difficulty, they would write down the decision of it, in order to render the points agreed to, clear and consistent. This I thought absolutely necessary, not only for the clearing up of the truth, but to have a standing proof of what I and others were to believe on the matter under examination.

But the Bishop of Meaux, who had promised Madam Maintenon a condemnation, and who would be the sole director in this affair, started so many difficulties, now on one pretence, then on another, that he found means to elude every thing I had desired, and would allow of nothing but what he pleased. He told me that I might talk with Monsieur Tronson, who was confined, after I had attended on him and the Bishop of Chalons. They met then at the house of the Bishop of Meaux. The Duke of Chevreuse was there also, expecting to be present at the conference, as I had desired him. The Bishop of Chalons arrived there

early. I spoke to him with great openness; and, as he had not then the impressions against me which have been given him since, I had room to be well satisfied therewith. I had the consolation to see him enter with a good disposition into what I said to him.

The Bishop of Meaux, after having made himself be long waited for, arrived toward evening. After a short space of general conversation, he opened a packet he had brought. He then told the Duke of Chevreuse that, the affair being a matter of doctrine, purely ecclesiastical, the judgment of which belonged only to the Bishops, he did not think it proper for him to be present, lest his presence should cramp their freedom. This was a mere sham, a poor evasion indeed, not to have a witness of so established a character, on whom he could not impose, artful as he was; he knew him to be too intelligent in that matter to let himself be surprised, and too upright not to give a faithful testimony to the truth of facts which would have passed before his eyes. The business of the conference was not the decision of a point of faith, which belongs to the Bishops, but a peaceable inquiry into my sentiments, in order to see in what I exceeded, and whether my expressions on matters of the inward life were conformable to approved mystic writers or not. For very often had I promised to submit to what these gentlemen should tell me was a point of faith, and the doctrine of the church, about which I never pretended to dispute with them.

But the Bishop of Meaux still went on with his design, determined not to swerve from it in the least. I was shocked at my very heart at this Prelate's refusal. After such exclusion of the Duke of Chevreuse, I might easily guess what was to follow. I was no longer in doubt about the engagements, entered into by this Bishop for my condemnation. What could be more natural than the presence of a person so eminent in the world, so famous both

for piety and learning, so greatly interested in the clearing up of these matters, that both he and others might be undeceived, if, against my intention, I had instilled notions into them contrary to the purity of the faith. Such a witness might have served to confound me, if I had spoken differently from what he had always been used to hear me speak. He might have been undeceived himself, and instrumental to undeceive others, if in a peaceable conference I had been shewed my errors. This was the very thing proposed, when the affair first began to be talked of: but God did not permit it. The Duke did not think proper to insist on staying, as the Bishop of Chalons was silent, his coming being only out of respect to me, and in compliance with my urgent desire. So I was now left alone with the two Bishops.

The Bishop of Meaux spoke a long time, to prove that all Christians in common had the same grace. I endeavoured to shew him the contrary. But as the main point was to justify my expressions on things of more consequence, I did not insist upon it: and was going to shew him the conformity of my sentiments with those of approved authors, who have written on the inward life. He endeavoured to darken, and to turn into mere jargon, every thing that I said; especially when he saw the Bishop of Chalons touched, penetrated, and entering into what I said to him. Then I was told, the business was not to dispute, but to submit; to believe and act as I should be told.—'That has ever been the disposition of my heart; I have no pain at laying down my own judgment.

The Bishop of Meaux picked out every thing from my writings which he could wrest against me; putting the worst constructions on them. Many times over he reproached me, saying, *I knew nothing*, burlesquing my words, and then crying out, *that he was astonished at my ignorance*. I returned no answer to these reproaches. He

made it another crime in me to have said, "That to cleave to God is the beginning of union with him." He would needs prove to me that all Christians, with common faith, without those inward experiences, may arrive at beatitude. It is impossible to answer a man who throws one on the ground, and who will not hear to any thing. As for me, I then lose the thread of what I wanted to say, and in the midst of such violence forget it all.

This conference was of no service at all, as to the main point in question. It only gave the Bishop of Meaux a pretence for informing Madam Maintenon, that he had finished the examination; and having convinced me of my errors, he hoped in time to bring me off from them, if he could but engage me to go and spend some time in a convent at Meaux, where he should be more at leisure to finish what he had begun.

I can truly say, when I was first told that I was to be examined by these gentlemen, I was glad, because I thought, as usual in such appointments, that they would all three together see me with them, and that Jesus Christ would have presided amongst us. From thence I hoped to gain my cause, because I had no doubt but that, in such case, the Lord would have shewed them the truth with my innocence, and the malice of my accusers. But God, who was pleased that I should suffer all that has since befallen me, did not permit this to be the case. He permitted a wrong spirit to act, to hinder union, and cause confusion.

As the Bishop of Meaux came so late, I had had a good opportunity before his coming, to speak to the Bishop of Chalons for a long time, in the presence of the Duke of Chevreuse, who readily listened to all I said. In the violent fits of the other, he endeavoured to soften and to ward off the blows from me, as much as he could. I saw that, when he acted of himself, he did it with all possible civility and justice. All that he could do was to write down only

some of my answers, when I addressed myself to him, at such times as the other Bishop, in the heat of his rage, would do nothing but reproach me, without hearing me. Afterwards I went to see again the Bishop of Chalons, found him alone, had a free conference with him, with which, though they had tried to prejudice him against me, yet he appeared to be well satisfied ; and repeated it several times, “ that he saw nothing to change, either in my manner of prayer, or in any thing else ; that I should go on as I had done, and that he would pray to God to augment his goodness toward me, and that I should continue to live retired, as I had done for two years past :” which I promised him to do.

It was thought proper also that I should go to see Monsieur Tronson. I then went to Issi. The Duke of Chevreuse was there too. Monsieur Tronson examined me with more exactness than the others, and the Duke was kind enough to write down the questions and answers. I spoke to him with all the freedom imaginable. At last the Duke of Chevreuse said to him, “ You see how sincere and upright she is.” He answered, “ I feel it well.” That expression was worthy of so great a servant of God as he was, who judged hereof not by his understanding only, but by the feelings of his heart. I then took my leave, and Monsieur Tronson appeared well satisfied, though a forged letter against me had been sent him, said to be from a person, who (when asked) denied it.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*She departs for the community of St. Mary. Dangers of the journey.  
Various trials, and sufferings.*

AFTER all these examinations, and making nothing out against me, who would not have thought but they would have left me to rest alone in peace? But quite otherwise, the more my innocence appeared, the more did they who had undertaken to render me criminal, put every spring in motion to effect it. I offered the Bishop of Meaux to go to spend some time in any community within his diocese, that he might be better acquainted with me. He proposed to me that of St. Mary de Meaux. This offer highly pleased him from a hope, as I have heard since, of deriving great temporal advantages from it. He told Mother Pickard, Prioress of the Monastery into which I entered, that *it would be as good to him as the Archbishoprick of Paris, and a Cardinal's hat.* When she told me of it, I replied, God will not permit him to have either the one or the other.

As soon as he ordered me I went off. It was in the month of January 1695, in the most frightful winter that has been of a long time, either before it or since. I had like to have perished in the snow, in which I was stopt four hours, the coach having entered into it, and being almost buried in it, in a deep hollow. I was drawn out at the coach door, with one maid. We sat upon the snow, resigned to the mercy of God, and expected nothing but death. I never had more tranquility of mind, though chilled and wet with the snow which melted on us. Occasions like these, are such as shew whether we are perfectly resigned to God or not. This poor girl and I were easy in our minds, in a state of entire resignation, though sure of dying if we passed the night there, and seeing no likelihood of any coming to our succour. At length some wagoners

came up, who with difficulty drew us through the snow. It was ten o'clock at night when we arrived. They had given over expecting us, and were gone to bed.

The Bishop, when he heard it, was astonished, and had no little self-complacency to think that I had thus risked my life to obey him so punctually: and yet afterwards he gave all this the names of artifice and hypocrisy. Thus men who look at the tree with an evil eye, account its fruits to be all evil. It is a strange hypocrisy which endures through one's whole life, and which, far from bringing any advantage with it in this world, causes only crosses, calumnies, poverty, persecutions, and every kind of affliction. I think one has never seen any hypocrisy like this. There are only two objects which hypocrites have in view; either to win the esteem of men or to make a fortune. I am certainly a bad hypocrite, and have badly learned the trade. I take God to witness, that if to be Empress of the whole earth, and canonized while living, I must have gone through what I have done, which was with the single view of being devoted to God without any reserve, I would rather have begged my bread, and died as a criminal. Thus I render testimony for myself in the presence of God, "That I have not desired to please any but him alone; that I have sought him only for himself; and that I dread every selfish interest of my own worse than death; that so long a series of persecutions, which in all likelihood will last as long as my life, has never made me change my sentiment, nor repent of my having given myself wholly to him, and of having left all for him."

There were times, indeed, when I found nature overcharged: but the love of God and his grace rendered sweet to me the very worst of bitters. His invisible hand supported me, else I had sunk under so many painful probations. Sometimes I said to myself, *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me, Psa. xiii. 7. Thou hast bent thy*

*bow and set me as a mark for the arrow. Thou hast caused all the arrows of thy quiver to enter into my reins, Lam. iii. 12, 13.* It seemed to me as if every one thought he was in the right to treat me ill, and rendered service to God in doing it. I then comprehended that it was the very manner in which Jesus Christ suffered. *He was numbered with the transgressors, Mark xv. 28.* He was condemned by the sovereign pontiff, chief priests, doctors of the law, and judges deputed by the Romans, who valued themselves on doing justice. Happy they who, by suffering for the will of God under all the like circumstances, have so near a relation to the sufferings of Jesus Christ!

Having reached the Convent, I waited above an hour in the turning box, chilled, and without a fire, as they had to acquaint the Bishop of my arrival, and to call up the nuns. There was at this round tower, or turning box, a good young man who spoke out aloud, saying, "This lady must surely have God on her side, to wait in the condition she is in with so much patience." By this speech he imprinted an esteem for me on the minds of some, who had been very much prepossessed against me. The Bishop of Meaux required me to change my name, "that nobody might know of my being in his diocese, and that he might not be tormented on my account," as he said: but he could not keep a secret: he soon told such as he met with, that I was in such a convent under such a name. Presently upon it anonymous libels against me were sent to the Prioress, and to the nuns, from all sides. But they did not hinder her and them from loving and esteeming me.

Though I had come to this place, on purpose that the Bishop might examine me more fully and thoroughly, and he had told it to such as came in his way, yet he set off for Paris the very next day after my arrival, and did not return till Easter. In the mean time my persecutors spread about a letter, which they said was from the Bishop of Grenoble,

wherein was written that he had banished me out of his diocese, as I had been convicted of gross crimes, in the presence of Father Richebrac, Prior of the Benedictines, though I had by me letters from the Bishop of Grenoble, written to me since my return from thence, which shewed quite the contrary. I wrote to Father Richebrac, and soon received from him a kind letter in answer to mine, in which he writes thus:

"MADAM,

"Is it possible they should come to seek me out in my retirement, to invent slander against you, and make me the instrument of it? I never once had the thought of what they make me say—On the contrary I now declare—that I never heard any thing of you but what was the most christian-like and virtuous, &c."

Dated at Blois the 14th of April, 1695.

The Bishop of Grenoble also at the same time wrote to the Curate of St. James *du haut pas*, who had been industrious in spreading this forged letter, in such a manner as to make him sensible of his resentment, in making him the author of such slanders. Above a year after I had left Grenoble, he did me the honour to write me a letter, inclosing one for his brother, the Lieutenant of the city, of which this is the copy:

"SIR,

"I cannot refuse to the virtue and piety of Madame de la Mothe Guion the recommendation she desires me to give you, in favour of her family, in an affair which is before you. I should have made some scruple of doing it, if I did not know the uprightness of her intentions, and your integrity. Admit therefore my solicitations to do her all the justice that is due to her. I request it of you with all the cordiality with which,

I am yours,

The CARDINAL CAMUS."

In his letter to her he mentions what pleasure it gives, and always will give him to do any thing to serve her.

Nothing at this time contributed more to the general outcry against me, than this forged letter from the Bishop of Grenoble : for how could any one give the lie to such a witness as the Curate of St. James, so well known for his connections with a great number of people of merit, to whom he had given copies of this letter, from whence, in a fortnight's time, all Paris was filled with them ! The Bishop of Meaux, who had a copy of it, as well as others, was strangely surprised at the answer of Father Richebrac, as well as at the letters from the Bishop of Grenoble, which I shewed him. He then exclaimed against the blackness of the forgery : for he had his good intervals, which were afterwards destroyed by the persons who stirred him up against me, and by the views of his own interest.

A Curate of Paris forged another story, very frightful, and yet very ridiculous. He went to the house of a person of high rank ; and talking about me, said, " I had seduced a wife from her husband, a man of quality, and got her to marry his Curate." They were very inquisitive on the occasion, pressing him to let them know how that could be done. He evaded giving a direct answer : only he still assured them that nothing could be more true. That nobleman and his lady no longer questioned its truth. They soon told it to one of their friends, who came on a visit to them, and who was acquainted with me. He let them know he did not believe it. But they positively insisted on it, as such a Curate had assured them of its reality. He resolved to search the matter fully, and never more to see me if he found it to be a fact. He went to find out this Curate, he examined him and pressed him closely. At length the Curate answered, " that I was capable of doing that and far worse." The gentleman said to him, " But sir, I do not ask you what she is capable of : I ask if it is

tree that she has done this?" He replied, "No: but she can do what is worse." This Curate, I think, had never seen me. However he pretended to recollect that he was told, it was in Auvergne that it was done: nay I think, he added, *forty years ago*. The people to whom he had told this fable, with such assurances of its truth, were strangely surprised when they heard of its falsehood. I wonder how they could ever have given any credit to it.

They further practised another stratagem, which was, to send a wicked woman, who took on her the name of one of my maids, to confess to all the curates and confessors in Paris. Her real name was la Gautiere. She confessed to several in a day, that she might let none escape. She told them, "That she had served me sixteen or seventeen years, but that she had left me for my abominations, as she could not in conscience live with so wicked a woman." In less than eight days I was decried all over Paris, and passed without contradiction for the wickedest woman in the world. Those who said it thought they might well do so, having it brought to them by so sure a channel. It so fell out that my maid, whose name she had assumed, went to confess to a Canon of Notre Dame. She spoke to him of the injuries done her mistress, who, she said, was very innocent. The Canon asked her name; she told him it. He replied, "You surprise me not a little, for there has come one to me that has not any resemblance of you, yet has given your name, and told me horrible things." She undeceived him, and set before him the blackness of such a procedure. The same thing was done to four or five others. But could she disabuse all the confessors in Paris? Besides, I could not suffer her to have recourse to confession to make known the truth, chusing to leave all to God, and not to lose any of the crosses and humiliations, which seemed to me to be providentially appointed for me.

After that sore evening of my arrival at Meaux, I had a

constant fever for six weeks. I was still very much indisposed, when the Bishop returned from Paris, only for the feast of Easter. He came into my chamber, and the first thing he said to me, was, "That I had many enemies, and that every thing was in a ferment against me." He brought me the articles composed at Issi. I asked him the explanations of some things, and then signed them. I found myself much worse after it. Another time he came to my bed-side, and said, he demanded me to sign immediately, "that I did not believe the Word incarnate," (or Christ manifested in the flesh.)

Several nuns, who were in the anti-chamber near my door, heard him. I was astonished at such a proposition coming from him. I said to him, "I could not sign a falsehood." He repeated it over and over that he would make me do it. I answered him, "That through the grace of God, I knew how to suffer, even to death; but not how to sign falsehoods." He then said, "he intreated me to do it; and that if I did he would re-establish my reputation, which people were trying to tear in pieces; that he would publish all the good of me that was possible." To this I answered, "that I left to God the care of my reputation, resolving to maintain my faith at the peril of my life."—Seeing he could not carry his point, he retired.

Mother Picard and the whole community gave me every testimony of a sincere affection in their power. They gave me also a certificate, of which the following is a copy.

"We, the prioress and nuns of the Visitation of St. Mary de Meaux, certify, that Madam Guion, having lived in our house, by order of our Lord Bishop of Meaux, our illustrious Prelate and Superior, during the space of six months, far from giving us any cause of trouble or uneasiness, has afforded us much edification. We have remarked in all her conduct and in all her words, a great regularity, simplicity, sincerity, mortification, meekness and christian pa-

tience ; a true devotion and esteem for whatever appertains to our most holy faith, especially the mystery of the incarnation and holy infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would be a favour, and of great satisfaction to our whole community, if the said lady chose for a retreat to spend the rest of her days in our house. This protestation is made without any other view than that of giving testimony to the truth.

Done this 7th of July, 1695, and signed,

Sister FRANCES ELIZABETH LE PICARD, Prioress.

Sister MAGDALEN AIMEE GUÉTON.

Sister CLAUDE MARIE AMOURI."

"When they spoke to the bishop about me, he answered, "I see just as ye do, nothing but good in her : but her enemies torment me, and want me to find evil in her." One day he wrote to Mother Picard, "that he had examined my writings with great care, and found in them nothing but some terms which were not in all the strictness of theology ; but that a woman was not obliged to be a theologian." Mother Picard shewed me this letter to console me.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*The Bishop of Meaux gives Madam Guion a good certificate, by which he displeases Madam Maintenon. He repents of having given it to her. At length her enemies obtain an order from the King for her being arrested, though sick, and put in prison.*

SOME days after the Bishop returned, he brought me a paper written with his own hand, which was only a profession of faith, that I had always been a Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman, and a submission of my books to the Church. Afterwards he read me a certificate which he said he was to give me. As I was too sick to transcribe that submission, to which I had not any objection, he said, "I might get a nun to transcribe it, and I might sign it." He carried away



his certificate to write it over fair, as he said ; and assured me that, "on my giving him the one, he would give me the other ; that he would treat me as his sister, and should be a knave if he did not." This procedure appearing so handsome, I said to him, "that I had put myself into his hands, as into those of a man of honour, as well as a Bishop." But fine words are not always followed with fine actions, as will be seen in the sequel. Mortals are changeable, whatever names they bear.

I was so ill after his departure, and so extremely weak, that they were obliged to recover me with cordial waters. The Prioress, fearing if he should come again to me the next day that it would be my death, wrote to desire him to let me have that day's repose: yet he would not; for he came that day and asked me whether I had signed the writing he had left with me; and opening a letter-case which had a lock on it, he said to me, "See here my certificate; where is your submission?" He held a paper when he said this. I showed him my submission which was on my bed. I had not strength to give him it. He took it. I then had no doubt but he would give me my certificate, as he had promised: but truly he would not. He put it again in his letter-case, and told me, "he would give me nothing: that I was not yet got to the end, that he was going to torment me much more; and that he would have other signatures beside what I had now given him, especially, that I did not believe in the incarnate Word." Judge of my surprise. I lost both my strength and speech. He went off. The Nuns were affrighted: nothing that I knew of had obliged him to promise me a certificate. I had never asked him for one.

Some time after, the Prelate came again to me. He asked me to sign his pastoral letter; to confess that I had fallen into the errors which are condemned therein. I endeavoured to show him that what I had given him comprehended every

sort of submission: and as in this letter he had numbered me with the malefactors, I endeavoured to honour this state of Jesus Christ without complaining. He said to me, "But you promised me to submit to my condemnation." "I do it with all my heart; said I, and I take no more interest in whatever I have written than if I never had written it. I will never depart from the submission and respect I owe you, however things turn. But, my Lord, you promised me a discharge." "I will give you it, said he, when you have done what I shall require of you." "My Lord, you did me the honour to tell me that, on my giving you that submission, you would give me my discharge." "These, said he, were words which escaped without thinking maturely on what both can and must be done." "I do not tell you it," said I, to trouble you with complaints, but to remind you of what you promised me: and to shew you my submission, I am willing to write at the foot of your pastoral letter whatever I can put there." Having done it, he read it, and said to me, "he liked it well enough." Then putting it in his pocket, he said, "This is not the matter. You do not say that you are formally an heretic. I will have you declare that, and acknowledge that you have been guilty of all the errors which it condemns. I answered, "Sure, my Lord, you say that to prove me. Would ever a prelate of piety commit such an abuse on the good faith with which I came to place myself in his diocese only to make me do things which in conscience I cannot do? I hoped to find in you a father: let not that hope meet with a deception." "I am a father of the church, said he: but in short, it is not a question of words. If you do not sign what I require, I will come with witnesses, and after having admonished you before them, I will inform the church of you, and we will cut you off, as we are directed in the gospel." "Then, my Lord, said I, I have only God for my witness. I am ready to suffer for him; and I hope he will grant me the favour to

let me do nothing against my conscience, yet without my departing from that respect which I owe you." He wanted beside to oblige me to declare that there were errors in the Latin book of Father la Combe, &c.

The good nuns, who had seen and heard a part of the violent rage of the Bishop, were exceedingly affrighted. Mother Picard told me, "that my too great mildness emboldened him to treat me roughly, because his mind was of such a cast, that he generally acted that way with mild people; but more gently with such as were stout and had courage." Such as knew that I had been at Meaux, thought I was there by order of the King, whereas I went thither of myself; and that the Bishop had examined me sundry times about the inward life, my manner of prayer, or love of God, whereas he never spoke to me about any of these things.

When he came to me he said, "he was satisfied with me; but it was my enemies that bade him torment me." At other times he would come full of fury, to demand that signature which he knew I could not give him. He threatened me with all I have suffered since. "He did not design, he said, to lose his fortune for me," and many more such things. After thus venting his fury, he returned to Paris and stayed there some time.

At last, after having been six months at Meaux, he gave me of himself a certificate, and asked me no further signature. What is astonishing to think of, at the very time he was most outrageous against me, he told me that if I would come and live in his diocese, I should do him a pleasure. A little before I left Meaux, he testified to the Archbishop of Paris and of Sens, how much he esteemed and had been edified by me. He preached to us one day, at mass, a surprising sermon on the inward life, and in it advanced things much stronger than I had done. He said that he was not master of himself, under the view which then was spread around him of those awful mysteries, and that God caused

him to make this confession of the truth against himself. The Prioress went to him after his sermon, and asked him, "how he could persecute me, when he even preached my sentiments." He answered, "it was not he; but my enemies that did it."

As I had now been six months at Meaux; though I had engaged to stay there only three, I asked the Bishop, if he desired any thing farther from me. He answered, No. I told him then that I now had need to go to Bourbon, and asked him if it would be agreeable to him that I should come to pass the rest of my days with those good nuns; for our spirits had been cemented in the bonds of mutual love, though the air of that place I found to be very bad for my constitution. He was much pleased with this proposal, and said to me, "he should always receive me with pleasure, that the nuns had been much edified by me; and that for himself he was now returning to Paris." I told him, "that either my daughter, or some ladies of my friends, would come for me." At hearing this, he turned to the Prioress, and said to her, "Pray receive well those who shall come for Madam Guion, whether it be her daughter, or other ladies. Lodge them in your house, as long as they shall be willing to stay." Two ladies came for me. They dined, supped and lodged there, and stayed to dinner next day. Then, about three o'clock, we took our leave of them and set off.

Scarcely had I got home but the Bishop repented his letting me go out of his diocese. What made him change; as was discovered since, was, that having given an account to Madam Maintenon of the terms on which this affair was finished, she was displeased with the certificate he had given me. He thought then that in losing me he had lost all the fine hopes he had flattered himself with. He wrote to me to return into his diocese. I received at the same time a letter from the Prioress, wherein she wrote, "that what-

ever desire she had of having me again in her house, she thought herself obliged to let me know the designs of the Bishop; and that he was resolved, if he had me again in his power, to torment me worse than ever." I knew that he hoped to establish a high fortune on the persecution he should carry on against me; and as the design of it was on another person far above me, he thought that in my escaping him it would be all lost. Mother Picard sent me with her letter a new certificate from the Bishop, but so far different from the former, which he desired me to send back, that I saw I had no justice to expect from him. Nevertheless, to observe all the rules of decency towards him, from which I never departed, I wrote to the Prioress, that I had placed what the Bishop demanded back from me, in the hands of my family, which, after all that had passed, had need of a piece of that nature for my vindication; and there was room to believe they would not part with it. In the first he certifies thus: "From the declarations and submissions of Madam Guion, together with the good testimony which has been given us of her, during the six months of her residence in our diocese, in the Monastery of St. Mary, we are satisfied with her conduct, and have continued to her the participation of the holy sacrament, in which we found her. We declare farther, that we have found her in no wise involved in the abominations of Molinos, or others otherwise condemned, and have not meant to comprehend her in the mention which hath been made thereof by us in our ordinance of the 6th of April, 1695."

"Given at Meaux, this first day of July, 1695.

"J. BENIGNE, Bishop of Meaux."

Now the latter certificate sent me by the Bishop seemed to support all that had been said against me, as it contained not a word to the contrary. Enraged at the refusal of giving up the former certificate to his demand, he gave out "that I had run away from the Convent, having leaped

over the walls." Besides my being a bad leaper, all the nuns were witnesses to the contrary : and yet this story was so current that many people believe it to this day. A procedure of this nature permitted me no more to resign myself to the discretion of the Bishop of Meaux : and as they gave me to understand, that they were going to push things with the utmost violence, I thought I ought to leave to God whatever might fall out, and at the same time take all the measures of prudence, to avoid the effect of the threats which came pouring on me on all sides. Many places of retreat were offered me ; but I was not free in my mind to accept of any, not to embarrass any body, nor involve in troubles my friends and my family, to whom they might attribute my escape. I took the resolution of not quitting Paris, of living there in some private place with my maids, who were trusty and sure, and in general to hide myself from the view of the world. I continued thus about five or six months. I passed the day all alone in reading, in praying to God, and in working. But toward the end of the year 1695,\* I was arrested, sick as I at that time was, and conducted to Vincennes. I was three days in the custody of Monsieur des Grez, who had arrested me ; because the King would not then consent to my being put in prison ; saying several times over, that a Convent was sufficient. They deceived his justice by still stronger calumnies.— They painted me to his eyes in colours so black, that they made him scruple his goodness and equity. He then consented to my being taken to Vincennes.

\* This was the 27th of December of said year.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Her reasons for suppressing the most grievous of her persecutions, and the hardships of a ten years imprisonment.*

I SHALL not speak of that long persecution, which has made so much noise, for a series of ten years imprisonments, in all sorts of prisons, and of a banishment almost as long, and not yet ended,\* through crosses, calumnies, and all imaginable sorts of sufferings. There are facts too odious on the part of divers persons, which charity induces me to cover: and it is in this sense that *charity covers a multitude of sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. And there are others on the part of those who, having been seduced by ill-disposed persons, are yet respected by me for their piety and other reasons, though they have shewn a zeal too bitter for things of which they had no true knowledge. The one sort I pass over in silence, out of respect, and the other out of charity. What I have to say is, that from so long a train of crosses with which my life has been filled, one may judge that the greatest were reserved till the last; and that God who, through an effect of his goodness, did not reject me, had no mind to leave the end of my life without a greater conformity to Jesus Christ. He was arraigned before all sorts of tribunals. He has done me the favour to be so too. He suffered the most violent outrages without complaining. He has conferred on me the mercy of doing the same. How could I do otherwise, in the view he gave me of his love and his goodness? In this resemblance of my Saviour, I regarded as favours, what the world looks upon as strange persecutions. The peace and joy I had within, hindered me from seeing the most violent persecu-

\* It seems that these words have been inserted by the author, on her reading over again her manuscript some years after the date, which will be seen at the end. Editor's note.

tors, otherwise than as instruments of the justice of my God, which has ever been to me so adorable and so amiable. I was then in prison as in a place of delight and refreshment, this general privation of all creatures giving me more room to be alone with God. Thus I regarded all those great apparent evils, and that universal decry as the greatest of all benefits. I looked upon it as the work of the hand of God, who was pleased to *cover his tabernacle with the skins of beasts*, to hide it from the eyes of those to whom he would not have it manifested.

I have borne long and sore languishings, oppressive and painful maladies without relief. I have been also inwardly under great desolations for several months, in such sort that I could only say these words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" All creatures seemed to be against me. I then put myself on the side of God, and of the creatures, against myself. How could I complain of what I suffered, with a love so clear from all self-interest? Should I now interest myself for myself, after having made so entire a sacrifice of whatever regards this self? No. I therefore chose rather to consecrate all these sufferings by silence.

I have defended my innocence with enough of courage and firmness, not to leave any doubt of the falsehood of the calumnies cast on persons whose prayer is fervent, and love sincere. The speeches of their slanderers are rash, and contrary to every sort of truth and justice; and yet the heart, which loves God, whose conscience reproaches it with nothing, even from hence gains an increase of strength and of happiness. Persecution is a weight which always sinks and plunges the soul into God. What matters it if all creatures are unchained against that soul, when it is all alone in sweet communion with its God, and gives him solid testimonies of its love? So, since there is no other way of testifying to God that we love him, than in bearing



heavy sufferings for his love, we are infinitely indebted to him when he gives us the means of doing it.

Perhaps some will be surprised at my refusing to give the detail of the greatest and strongest crosses of my life, after I have related those which were less. I thought it proper to tell something of the crosses of my youth, to shew the crucifying conduct which God held over me. I thought myself also obliged to relate certain facts to manifest their falsehood, the conduct of those by whom they had passed, and the authors of those persecutions of which I have been only the accidental object, as I was only persecuted in order to involve therein persons of great merit; whom, being out of their reach by themselves, they therefore could not personally attack, but by confounding their affairs with mine. I thought I owed it to religion, piety, my friends, my family and myself.

While I was prisoner at Vincennes, and Monsieur de la Reine examined me, I passed my time in great peace, content to pass the rest of my life there, if such were the will of God. I sang songs of joy, which the maid who served me learned by heart, as fast as I made them: and we together sang thy praises, oh my God! The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which thou givest to them who love thee, in the midst of their greatest crosses.

This peace was wounded, for a short space, by an infidelity which I fell into. It was in premeditating one day on what answers I should make, at an examination which was to be the next day. I answered badly. God, who had so often caused me to answer difficult and perplexing questions, with much facility and presence of mind, punished me now, even by stopping me short on easy matters with confusion. It served to shew me the inutility of our arrangements on such occasions, and the safety of trusting

in God. They who depend on human reason say, "It is necessary to look before us, and to make our preparations ; that it is to tempt God, and expect miracles, to act otherwise." I leave others to think what they will. As to me, I find no safety but in resigning myself to God. All scripture abounds with texts enforcing such a resignation.

When things were carried to the greatest extremities, I, then being in the Bastile, said to thee, oh my God, if thou art pleased to render me a new spectacle to men and angels, thy holy will be done ! All I ask is, that thou wilt save thine, so that neither *principalities, nor powers, nor the sword, may ever separate them from the pure love in Jesus Christ*. As for me, what matters it what men think of me, or make me suffer, since they cannot separate me from thee ? Were I to please all men and displease thee, wretched would be the consequence. Let all men then despise and hate me, so I may but be agreeable to thee.— Their strokes will polish what may be defective in me, that I may be presented to him for whom I die daily. I saw all men united as it were to surprise and torment me, all the subtilty of wit employed for it, by people who had abundance of it ; and myself, alone, without succour, sometimes also feeling the heavy hand of God upon me, who seemed to abandon me to myself, and to my own obscurity ; all my own vivacity having been so long mortified, having laboured all my life long to submit myself to Jesus Christ, and my reason to his conduct. I voluntarily underwent, as long as my health permitted it, very rigorous fastings and austere penances : but all this looked only like the burning of straw. One moment of the conduct of God is of a thousand times more efficacy than all that we can inflict upon ourselves.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Of her interior dispositions toward the last part of her time. An affectionate salutation of her children in the faith, and prayer for them. Conclusion.*

As my life has ever been consecrated to the cross, I was no sooner out of prison, and my spirit began to breathe a little, after so many persecutions, but my body was afflicted with all sorts of infirmities. I have had almost continual maladies, which often brought me to the very verge of death.

In these last times I can hardly speak at all of my dispositions. It is because my state is become simple and without any variations. It is a profound annihilation. I find nothing in myself to which I can give a name. All that I know is that God is infinitely holy, righteous, good and happy. I see nothing below myself, nothing more unworthy of his bounties than myself. I acknowledge that God has heaped his favours on me, enough to save a world, which I have too much requited with ingratitude. All good is in him; as to myself, I am only a mere NOTHING. To me every condition seems equal. All is lost in his immensity, like a drop of water in the sea. In this divine immensity the soul sees itself no more, but it discerns every object in God, without discerning them otherwise than by the feeling of the heart. All is darkness in regard to itself, all is light on the side of God, who permits me to be ignorant of nothing that is proper, or of real advantage. There is here neither clamour, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor vain pleasure, nor uncertainty; but a perfect peace; not in myself but in God: no interest for self, no anxiety or bustle for self. If any think there is any good in me, they are mistaken, and by such thought do injury to my Lord. All good is in him and for him. The greatest satisfaction I

can have is because *he is what he is*; and because *what he is he will be for ever*. If he save me, it will be gratuitously; for I have neither merit nor dignity.

I am astonished that any should place confidence in such a poor nothing creature as I am. I have sometimes said it. Nevertheless, I answer what they ask without difficulty. My own will and inclinations are vanished. Poverty and nakedness are my share. Sometimes indeed I could wish to undergo the worst of sufferings, so that souls might be brought thereby to know and love God.

I dearly love the church: whatever wounds that wounds me. I seek nothing for myself. I study nothing; but there are given me immediately, as occasion requires, expressions and words very forcible. If I wanted to have them they would escape me, and I could by no means catch or come at them. When I have something to say, if I am interrupted, it is all lost. I am then like a child from whom, unperceiving, his apple is withdrawn. He looks about for it, but all in vain: he finds it no more. My God keeps me in an extreme simplicity, godly sincerity, uprightness of heart, and enlargedness of spirit, in such sort that as to particular things, I seem to look from and above them, and of them to see nothing at all, except when occasions present them.

He gives me a free air with the various numbers of people who come to see me; and makes me discourse with them, not according to any dispositions of my own, but according to their states. I am not afraid of any of them laying snares for me in what they say. I cannot have recourse to precautions in any of these cases, conscious of my own innocence and uprightness in them. Oh carnal prudence! How opposite do I find thee to the simplicity of Jesus Christ! I leave thee to thy partisans. As for me, all my prudence, my wisdom, is in following him in his simple and lowly appearance: and if to change my conduct would make me an Empress, I could not do it; or were

my simplicity to cause me all the heaviest sufferings, I could not depart from it.

Nothing is greater than God, nothing less than myself. He is rich, I am poor ; and yet I want nothing. Life or death is equal to me. God is love. All good is in him and for him. What I have said, or written, is all past away from me. I remember little or nothing of it. I want neither justification nor esteem. I want nothing but God and his glory. Let him then, if he sees it best, glorify himself by my destruction, or by re-establishing my reputation. The one or the other bears equal weight in the balance with me.

My children, I will not deceive or mislead you. It belongs to God to enlighten you, and to give you esteem or disesteem for me. I want only to keep my place, and go no more out, no more to move from my centre. I pray God to enlighten you always, to give you thereby the clear discernment of his holy will, that no false light may ever lead you to the precipice.

O my dear children, open your eyes to the light of truth. *Holy Father, sanctify them through thy truth.* Thy divine Word has spoken to them through my mouth. Christ alone is the Truth. He said of his apostles, *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.* Oh say the same thing to my children. Sanctify thyself in them and for them. It is being truly sanctified in all holiness, to have none of our own but only the holiness of Jesus Christ. Let him alone be all in all in us and for us, that the work of sanctification may be carried on through the experimental knowledge of the divine truth. To him belongeth all wisdom, strength, greatness, power and glory; to us poverty, emptiness, weakness and misery. Let us abide in our nothingness, paying homage to his holiness : then shall we find in him all that we want. If we seek for any thing for SELF out of him, then, however holy he may appear to us, we are liars, and the truth

abideth not in us. We deceive ourselves, and in that state shall never be the saints of God, who, having no other holiness than his, have renounced all selfish usurpation of his sacred rights.

Holy Father, I have committed into thy hands those whom thou hast given me ; keep them in thy truth, that the lie may not come near them ; for to attribute any thing to one's self is to be in the lie : make them know this to be the great truth of which thou art jealous. All language which deviates from this principle is falsehood. He who speaks only the ALL OF GOD, AND NOTHING OF THE CREATURE, is in the truth, and the truth dwelleth in him, usurpation and selfishness being banished from him. My children, receive this instruction from your mother, and it will procure you life. Receive it through her, not as for her, but as of and for God. Amen ! Lord Jesus Christ !

#### CONCLUSION.

I intreat all such as shall read this, not to think hardly of the persons, who through a zeal, perhaps too bitter, have carried things so far against a woman, and against one so submissive ; because, as Taulerus says in his Institutions, Chap. xi. " God willing to purify a soul by sufferings, might permit an infinite number of well-disposed persons to fall into darkness and blindness toward that soul, in order to prepare this chosen vessel, by the rash bias of their judgments in such a state of ignorance ; but that at last, after having purified this vessel, he will take away the veil sooner or later, from their eyes, not treating them with rigour for a fault which they have committed through a hidden conduct of his adorable providence. I say much more, that sooner would God send an angel from Heaven, to refine this chosen vessel through tribulations, than leave it without sufferings."

*December, 1709.*

Here she left off her own narrative, though she lived a retired life above seven years after this date. What she

wrote being done only in obedience to the commands of her Director.

The writer of the life of the Archbishop of Cambray has therein given us a brief summary of that of Lady Guion, from her birth till her death. He tells us that she was born of noble parents; that in the time of her widowhood her estate brought her in above forty thousand livres a year, till she gave up to her relations her *garde-noble*, and reserved no more than a small annuity to herself; that the Bishop of Geneva, so often mentioned in the second part, was Monsieur D'Aranton.

After giving the account of her being arrested and sent prisoner to Vincennes, and her obtaining a testimonial in her favour from the assembly of the Bishops, after she had been in the Bastille and other prisons five years, he concludes thus :

“ She remained however several years longer in prison, sick, and in a suffering condition. She continually demanded her crime to be specified and proved. Her enemies unable to make any thing appear against her, she was at length discharged from her confinement, and banished to Blois, where she lived near twelve years, honoured and respected for her good understanding, sincere piety, pure and modest virtue, even by those who had entertained the strongest prejudices against her. She died at length in Blois, [on the 9th of June, 1717, in the 70th year of her age,] tenderly regretted by her family and all her friends.”

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From the known characters of Thomas Digby Brooke, William Cowper, Esq. and other translators of the life and writings of Lady Guion, there can be no doubt at this period, of the authenticity of the preceding account. And though there are some things in her religious sentiments, that to us may appear strange, as not according with our own experience, yet, nevertheless, we should examine her opinions with candour, and not condemn until we have tested them by the Scripture.

# POEMS

OF

## MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUION.\*

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

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### THE NATIVITY.

POÈME HEROIQUE.

'Tis folly all—let me no more be told  
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold :  
Delightful views of nature dress'd by art,  
Enchant no longer this indiff'rent heart :  
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,  
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth ;  
The straw, the manger, and the mould'ring wall,  
Eclipse its lustre ; and I scorn it all.

Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,  
Green slopes, and plains whose plenty never fails ;  
Deep rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,  
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies ;  
Th' abundant foilage of whose gloomy shades,  
Vainly the sun in all its pow'r invades ;  
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound ;  
Whose verdure lives while winter scowls around :  
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,  
And torrents raving down the rugged steep ;

\* The Translator of the Life of Lady Guion, informs us, that she composed, in her long imprisonment, many Hymns, with Poems on Spiritual subjects, filling five octavo volumes. Her poetic vein, he adds, was free, flowing with warm devotion and gratitude.

The following specimens are selected from a small volume of Translations, by the author of "THE TASK."



Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer,  
Meads, crown'd with flow'rs ; streams musical and clear,  
Whose silver waters, and whose murmurs, join  
Their artless charms, to make the scene divine ;  
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrow'd plain,  
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain ;  
All, all have lost the charms they once possess'd ;  
An infant God reigns sov'reign in my breast ;  
From Beth'lem's bosom I no more will rove ;  
There dwells my Saviour, and there rests my love.

Ye mightier rivers, that with sounding force  
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course !  
Winds, clouds, and light'nings ! and ye waves, whose heads  
Curl'd into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads !  
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,  
Spread with the wreck of planks, and shatter'd sails :  
On whose broad back grim death triumphant rides,  
While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,  
Thy shores a scene of ruin strew'd around  
With vessels bilg'd, and bodies of the drown'd !

Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,  
And rest secure from man in rocky caves ;  
Swift darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,  
Whom all th' aquatic world with terror eyes !  
Had I but faith immoveable and true,  
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you :  
The world, a more disturb'd and boist'rous sea,  
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me :  
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,  
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.

Thou azure vault, where, through the gloom of night,  
Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of light !  
Thou moon, whose car encompassing the skies,  
Restores lost nature to our wond'ring eyes :  
Again retiring, when the brighter sun  
Begins the course he seems in haste to run !

Behold HIM where he shines! His rapid rays,  
 Themselves unmeasur'd, measure all our days;  
 Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,  
 Nothing escapes his penetrating view,  
 A thousand lands confess his quick'ning heat,  
 And all he cheers, are fruitful, fair, and sweet.

Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,  
 I feel the thorn, alas! but miss the rose:  
 Too well I know this aching heart requires  
 More solid good to fill its vast desires.  
 In vain they represent his matchless might,  
 Who call'd them out of deep primeval night;  
 Their form and beauty but augment my woe,  
 I seek the giver of the charms they show;  
 Nor, him beside, throughout the world he made,  
 Lives there, in whom I trust for cure or aid.

Infinite God, thou great unrivall'd one,  
 Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun;  
 Compar'd with thine, how dim his beauty seems,  
 How quench'd the radiance of his golden beams!  
 Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move;  
 In thee alone dwells all that I can love;  
 All darkness flies when thou art pleas'd t' appear;  
 A sudden spring renews the fading year;  
 Where e'er I turn, I see thy power and grace,  
 The watchful guardians of our heedless race:  
 Thy various creatures in one strain agree,  
 All, in all times and places, speak of thee;  
 Ev'n I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,  
 Attempt thy praise, and join the gen'ral song.

Almighty former of this wond'rous plan,  
 Faintly reflected in thine image, man—  
 Holy and just—the greatness of whose name  
 Fills and supports this universal frame,

Diffus'd throughout th' infinitude of space,  
 Who art thyself thine own vast dwelling-place ;  
 Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours  
 Discerns, eluding our most active pow'rs ;  
 Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,  
 That veil thy face, and keep thee still unknown ;  
 Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,  
 Lord of the thoughts, and sov'reign of the heart !

Repeat the charming truth that never tires,  
 No God is like the God my soul desires ;  
 He at whose voice heav'n trembles, even he,  
 Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me.  
 Lo ! there he lies—that smiling infant said,  
 “ Heav'n, earth, and sea, exist ! ” and they obey'd.  
 Ev'n he, whose being swells beyond the skies,  
 Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies ;  
 Eternal and immortal, seems to cast  
 That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.  
 Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,  
 How do they shrink ; and vanish at the thought !

Sweet solitude, and scene of my repose !  
 This rustic sight assuages all my woes—  
 That crib contains the Lord whom I adore ;  
 And earth's a shade, that I pursue no more.  
 He is my firm support, my rock, my tow'r,  
 I dwell secure beneath his shelt'ring pow'r,  
 And hold this mean retreat forever dear,  
 For all I love, my soul's delight is here.  
 I see th' Almighty swath'd in infant bands,  
 Tied helpless down, the thunder-bearer's hands !  
 And in this shed, that mystery discern,  
 Which faith and love, and they alone can learn.

Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord !  
 Ye zephyrs, all your whisper'd sweets afford !  
 Confess the God that guides the rolling year ;  
 Heav'n, do him homage ; and thou earth, revere !

Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring  
Your hearts an offering, and adore your King !  
Pure be those hearts, and rich in faith and love :  
Join, in his praise, the harmonious worlds above ;  
To Bethl'em haste, rejoice in his repose,  
And praise him there for all that he bestows !

Man, busy man, alas ! can ill afford  
T' obey the summons, and attend the Lord ;  
Perverted reason revels and runs wild,  
By glitt'ring shows of pomp and wealth beguil'd ;  
And blind to genuine excellence and grace,  
Finds not her author in so mean a place.  
Ye unbelieving ! learn a wiser part,  
Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart ;  
There, soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame  
Glow for that infant God from whom it came :  
Resist not, quench not that divine desire,  
Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire !

Not so will I requite thee, gentle love !  
Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove ;  
And ev'ry heart beneath thy pow'r should fall,  
Glad to submit, could mine contain them all,  
But I am poor, oblation I have none,  
None for a Saviour, but himself alone !  
Whate'er I render thee, from thee it came :  
And if I give my body to the flame,  
My patience, love, and energy divine  
Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are thine,  
Ah vain attempt, t' expunge the mighty score !  
The more I pay, I owe thee still the more.

Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,  
The trophy of thy glory shall be built :  
My self-disdain shall be th' unshaken base,  
And my deformity, its fairest grace ;  
For destitute of good, and rich in ill,  
Must be my state and my description still.

And do I grieve at such a humbling lot?  
 Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought.  
 Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu!  
 I have no wish, no memory for you;  
 The more I feel my mis'ry, I adore  
 The sacred inmate of my soul the more;  
 Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride  
 Spring from the sense of having nought beside.

In thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might;  
 My wand'rings prove thy wisdom infinite;  
 All that I have, I give thee; and then see  
 All contrarieties unite in thee;  
 For thou hast join'd them, taking up our woe,  
 And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,  
 By filling with thy grace and love divine  
 A gulph of evil in this heart of mine.  
 This is indeed to bid the valleys rise,  
 And the hills sink—'tis matching earth and skies!  
 I feel my weakness, thank thee, and deplore  
 An aching heart that throbs to thank thee more;  
 The more I love thee, I the more reprove  
 A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love;  
 Till, on a deluge of thy mercy toss'd,  
 I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

#### GOD NEITHER KNOWN NOR LOVED BY THE WORLD.

Ye Linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,  
 Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise!  
 In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove,  
 For all the world is blind, and wanders from his ways.  
 That God alone should prop the sinking soul,  
 Fills them with rage against his empire now;  
 I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,  
 To seek one simple heart, set free from all below.

They speak of love; yet little feel its sway,  
 While in their bosoms many an idol larks;  
 Their base desires well satisfied obey,  
 Leave the Creator's hand, and lean upon his works.

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more;  
 Your fellowship, ye warblers! suits me best:  
 Pure love has lost its price, though priz'd of yore,  
 Profan'd by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who form'd you for his praise alone,  
 Beholds his purpose well fulfill'd in you;  
 Come, let us join the choir before his throne,  
 Partaking in his praise with spirits just and true!

Yes, I will always love; and, as I ought,  
 Tune to the praise of love my ceaseless voice;  
 Preferring love too vast for human thought,  
 In spite of erring men, who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,  
 Lord of my soul! that they might all be thine?  
 If thou approve—the zeal thy smile imparts,  
 How should it ever fail! Can such a fire decline?

Love, pure and holy, is a deathless fire;  
 Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:  
 Eternal love, a God must needs inspire,  
 When once he wins the heart and fits it for his praise.

Self-love dismiss'd—'tis then we live indeed—  
 In her embrace, death, only death is found:  
 Come then, one noble effort, and succeed,  
 Cast off the chain of self, with which thy soul is bound!

Oh! I would cry that all the world might hear,  
 Ye self-tormenters, love your God alone;  
 Let his unequal'd excellence be dear,  
 Dear to your inmost souls, and make him all your own!

They hear me not—alas! how fond to rove  
 In endless chase of folly's specious lure!  
 'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,  
 I taste the sweets of Truth—here only am secure.

### THE SWALLOW.

I AM fond of the swallow, I learn from her flight,  
 Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of love:  
 How seldom on earth do we see her alight!  
 She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,  
 Suspended, and pois'd in the regions of air,  
 'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,  
 It is wing'd like herself, 'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,  
 And dreading the cold, still follows the sun—  
 So, true to our love, we should covet his rays,  
 And the place where he shines not, immediately shun

Our light should be love, and our nourishment pray'r;  
 It is dangerous food that we find upon earth;  
 The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,  
 In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely, if ever, she settles below,  
 And only when building a nest for her young;  
 Were it not for her brood, she would never bestow  
 A thought upon any thing filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves, ('tis a mortal abode)  
 To bask ev'ry moment in infinite love;  
 Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road  
 That leads to the day-spring appearing above.

## HEAVENLY LOVE DESIRED.

AH ! reign, wherever man is found,  
My Spouse, beloved and divine !  
Then I am rich, and I abound,  
When ev'ry human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,  
To think that all are not thine own :  
Ah ! be ador'd from pole to pole ;  
Where is thy zeal ? arise ; be known !

All hearts are cold, in ev'ry place,  
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue ;  
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,  
Thaw these of ice, and give us new !

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## ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL AFTER GOD.

MY Spouse ! in whose presence I live,  
Sole object of all my desires,  
Who know'st what a flame I conceive,  
And canst easily double its fires ;  
How pleasant is all that I meet !  
From fear of adversity free,  
I find even sorrow made sweet ;  
Because 'tis assign'd me by thee,  
Transported I see thee display  
Thy riches and glory divine ;  
I have only my life to repay,  
'Take what I would gladly resign,  
Thy will is the treasure I seek,  
For thou art as faithful as strong ;  
There let me, obedient and meek,  
Repose myself all the day long.



My spirit and faculties fail ;  
 Oh finish what love has begun !  
 Destroy what is sinful and frail,  
 And dwell in the soul thou hast won !  
 Dear theme of my wonder and praise,  
 I cry, who is worthy as thou !  
 I can only be silent and gaze ;  
 'Tis all that is left to me now.

Oh glory, in which I am lost,  
 Too deep for the plummet of thought ?  
 On an ocean of Deity toss'd,  
 I am swallow'd, I sink into nought.  
 Yet lost and absorb'd as I seem,  
 I chant to the praise of my King ;  
 And though overwhelm'd by the theme,  
 Am happy whenever I sing.

### GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO GOD.

ALL are indebted much to thee,  
 But I far more than all,  
 From many a deadly snare set free,  
 And rais'd from many a fall.  
 Overwhelm me, from above,  
 Daily, with thy boundless love.  
 What bonds of gratitude I feel,  
 No language can declare ;  
 Beneath th' oppressive weight I reel,  
 'Tis more than I can bear :  
 When shall I that blessing prove,  
 To return thee love for love ?

Spirit of charity, dispense  
 Thy grace to ev'ry heart ;

Expel all other spirits thence,  
 Drive self from every part :  
 Charity divine draw nigh,  
 Break the chains in which we lie !  
 All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,  
 Have still a slavish lot ;  
 They boast of liberty in vain,  
 Of love, and feel it not.  
 He whose bosom glows with thee,  
 He, and he alone, is free.  
 Oh blessedness, all bliss above,  
 When thy pure fires prevail !  
 Love only teaches what is love ;  
 All other lessons fail :  
 We learn its name, but not its pow'rs,  
 Experience only makes it ours.

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#### TRUTH AND DIVINE LOVE,

O LOVE, of pure and heavenly birth !  
 O simple truth, scarce known on earth !  
 Whom men resist with stubborn will ;  
 And more perverse and daring still,  
 Smother and quench with reas'nings vain,  
 While error and deception reign.  
 Whence comes it, that your pow'r the same  
 As his on high, from whom you came,  
 Ye rarely find a listening ear,  
 Or heart that makes you welcome here ?—  
 Because ye bring reproach and pain,  
 Where'er ye visit, in your train.  
 The world is proud, and cannot bear,  
 The scorn and calumny ye share :

The praise of men, the mark they mean,  
 They fly the place where ye are seen ;  
 Pure love, with scandal in the rear,  
 Suits not the vain ; it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,  
 Though poor, I am prepar'd to pay ;  
 Come shame, come sorrow ; spite of tears,  
 Weakness, and heart-oppressing fears ;  
 One soul, at least, shall not repine,  
 To give thee room, come, reign in mine !

### THE SOUL THAT LOVES GOD

FINDS HIM EVERY WHERE.

OH thou, by long experience tried,  
 Near whom no grief can long abide ;  
 My Lord ! how full of sweet content  
 I pass my years of banishment !

All scenes alike engaging prove,  
 To souls impress'd with sacred love ;  
 Where'er they dwell, they dwell in thee ;  
 In heav'n, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time ;  
 My country is in ev'ry clime :  
 I can be calm and free from care  
 On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,  
 'The soul finds happiness in none ;  
 But with a God to guide our way,  
 'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where thou art not,  
 That were indeed a dreadful lot ;  
 But regions none remote I call,  
 Secure of finding God in all.

My country, Lord, art thou alone ;  
 Nor other can I claim or own ;  
 The point where all my wishes meet ;  
 My law, my love ; life's only sweet !

I hold by nothing here below ;  
 Appoint my journey, and I go ;  
 Though pierc'd by scorn, oppress'd by pride,  
 I feel the good—feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove  
 To souls on fire with heav'nly love ;  
 Though men and devils both condemn,  
 No gloomy days arise for them.

Ah then ! to his embrace repair ;  
 My soul, thou art no stranger there ;  
 There love divine shall be thy guard,  
 And peace and safety thy reward.

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### LIVING WATER.

THE fountain in its source,  
 No drought of summer fears ;  
 The farther it pursues its course,  
 The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield  
 A scanty, short supply ;  
 The morning sees them amply fill'd,  
 The ev'ning finds them dry.

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### HAPPY SOLITUDE—UNHAPPY MEN.

My heart is easy, and my burden light :  
 I smile, though sad, when thou art in my sight :  
 The more my woes in secret I deplore,  
 I taste thy goodness, and I love the more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,  
Faith, love, and hope, within my soul abound ;  
And while the world suppose me lost in care,  
The joys of angels, unperceiv'd, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou Sov'reign Good !  
Thou art not lov'd, because not understood ;  
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile  
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.

Frail beauty, and false honour, are ador'd ;  
While thee they scorn, and trifle with thy word ;  
Pass, unconcern'd, a Saviour's sorrows by ;  
And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

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#### THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE ADOPTION.

How happy are the new-born race,  
Partakers of adopting grace !

How pure the bliss they share !  
Hid from the world and all its eyes,  
Within their heart the blessing lies,  
And conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours ;  
And if we love with all our pow'rs  
The God from whom it came,  
And if we serve with hearts sincere,  
'Tis still discernible and clear,  
An undisputed claim.

But ah ! if foul and wilful sin  
Stain and dishonour us within,  
Farewell the joy we knew  
Again the slaves of nature's sway,  
In lab'rins of our own we stray,  
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure, who fear to grieve  
 The gracious Spirit they receive,  
 His work distinctly trace ;  
 And strong in undissembling love,  
 Boldly assert and clearly prove,  
 Their hearts his dwelling place.

Oh Messenger of dear delight,  
 Whose voice dispels the deepest night,  
 Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove !  
 With thee at hand to sooth our pains,  
 No wish unsatisfied remains,  
 No task, but that of love,

'Tis love unites what sin divides :  
 The centre where all bliss resides,  
 To which the soul once brought,  
 Reclining on the First Great Cause,  
 From his abounding sweetness draws  
 Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow foregoes its nature there,  
 And life assumes a tranquil air,  
 Divested of its woes ;  
 There, Sov'reign Goodness sooths the breast,  
 Till then, incapable of rest,  
 In sacred sure repose.

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#### REPOSE IN GOD.

BLEST! who far from all mankind,  
 This world's shadows left behind,  
 Hears from heav'n a gentle strain,  
 Whisp'ring love, and loves again.  
 Blest ! who free from self-esteem,  
 Dives into the great Supreme,  
 All desire beside discards,  
 Joys inferior none regards.

Blest ! who in thy bosom seeks  
Rest that nothing earthly breaks,  
Dead to self and worldly things,  
Lost in thee, thou King of kings!

Ye that know my secret fire,  
Softly speak, and soon retire ;  
Favour my divine repose,  
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

#### WATCHING UNTO GOD IN THE NIGHT SEASON.

SLEEP at last has fled these eyes,  
Nor do I regret his flight,  
More alert my spirits rise,  
And my heart is free and light.

Nature silent all around,  
Not a single witness near ;  
God, as soon as sought, is found ;  
And the flame of love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,  
Checks the current of my joys ;  
Creatures press me with a throng,  
And perplex me with their noise.

Undisturb'd I muse, all night,  
On the first Eternal Fair ;  
Nothing there obstructs delight,  
Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,  
Proves a foe to love and me ;  
Fresh entanglements occur—  
Comes the night, and sets me free.

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend  
My enjoyments, always new ;

Leave me to possess my Friend ;  
 Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world, that I may wake  
 To the taste of pure delights ;

Oh the pleasures I partake—  
 God, the Partner of my nights !

David, for the self-same cause,  
 Night preferr'd to busy day ;  
 Hearts, whom heav'nly beauty draws,  
 Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers, is for you—  
 Souls that love celestial know,  
 Fairer scenes by night can view,  
 Than the sun could ever show.

#### THE JOY OF THE CROSS.

Long plung'd in sorrow, I resign  
 My soul to that dear hand of thine,  
 Without reserve or fear ;  
 That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes ;  
 Or into smiles of glad surprise,  
 Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is thy love ;  
 In earth beneath or heav'n above,  
 I have no other store ;  
 And though with fervent suit I pray,  
 And importune thee night and day,  
 I ask thee nothing more.

My rapid hours pursue the course  
 Prescrib'd them by love's sweetest force ;  
 And I, thy sov'reign will,  
 Without a wish t' escape my doom ;  
 Though still a sufferer from the womb,  
 And doom'd to suffer still.



By thy command, where'er I stray,  
Sorrow attends me all my way,  
A never-failing friend ;  
And if my suff'rings may augment  
Thy praise, behold me well content—  
Let sorrow still attend !

It costs me no regret, that she,  
Who follow'd Christ, should follow me ;  
And though, where'er she goes,  
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,  
I love her and extract a sweet  
From all my bitter woes.

Adieu ! ye vain delights of earth ;  
Inspid sports, and childish mirth,  
I taste no sweets in you ;  
Unknown delights are in the cross,  
All joy beside, to me is dross ;  
And Jesus thought so too.

The cross ! Oh ravishment and bliss—  
How grateful ev'n its anguish is ;  
Its bitterness, how sweet !  
There ev'ry sense, and all the mind,  
In all her faculties refin'd,  
Tastes happiness complete.

Souls once enabled to disdain  
Base sublunary joys, maintain  
Their dignity secure ;  
The fever of desire is pass'd,  
And love has all its genuine taste,  
Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,  
Consults her own peculiar ease ;  
'Tis all the bliss she knows :

But nobler aims true love employ ;  
 In self-denial is her joy,  
 In suff'ring her repose.

Sorrow and love, go side by side ;  
 Nor height, nor depth, can e'er divide  
 Their heav'n-appointed bands ;  
 Those dear associates still are one,  
 Nor, till the race of life is run,  
 Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,  
 Thou faithful Lover, above all  
 The cross has ever borne !  
 Oh tell me,—life is in thy voice—  
 How much afflictions were thy choice,  
 And sloth and ease thy scorn !

Thy choice, and mine, shall be the same ;  
 Inspirer of that holy flame,  
 Which must forever blaze !  
 To take the cross, and follow thee,  
 Where love and duty lead, shall be  
 My portion and my praise.

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#### SCENES FAVOURABLE TO MEDITATION.

WILDS horrid and dark with o'ershadowing trees,  
 Rocks that ivy and briars infold,  
 Scenes nature with dread and astonishment sees,  
 But I with a pleasure untold.

Though awfully silent, and shaggy and rude,  
 I am charm'd with the peace ye afford,  
 Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,  
 The abode of my Lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendour, O fountain of day,  
And here I am hid from thy beams,  
Here safely contemplate a brighter display  
Of the noblest and holiest themes.

Here sweetly forgetting, and wholly forgot  
By the world and its turbulent throng,  
The birds and the streams lend me many a note  
That aids meditation and song.

Here wand'ring in scenes that are sacred to night,  
Love wears me, and wastes me away,  
And often the sun has spent much of his light,  
Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelopes the sphere,  
My sorrows are safely rehears'd,  
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,  
And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the desert agree,  
Mankind are the wolves that I fear,  
They grudge me my natural right to be free,  
But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode  
That appetite wishes to find,  
My spirit is sooth'd by the presence of God,  
And appetite wholly resign'd.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led,  
My life I in praises employ,  
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed,  
Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There is nothing I seem to have skill to discern,  
I feel out my way in the dark,  
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn,  
Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem to myself to be dead,  
 Such a riddle is not to be found ;  
 I am nourish'd without knowing how I am fed,  
 I have nothing, and yet I abound.

Oh Love ! who in darkness art pleas'd to abide,  
 Though dimly, yet surely I see,  
 That these contrarieties only reside  
 In the soul that is chosen of thee.

Ah ! send me not back to the race of mankind  
 Perversely by folly beguil'd,  
 For where in the crowds I have left shall I find  
 The spirit and heart of a child ?

Here let me, though fix'd in a desert, be free,  
 A little one whom they despise,  
 Though lost to the world, if in union with thee,  
 Shall be holy, and happy and wise.

#### A FRAGMENT.

YE sever'd isles, and Hyperborean plains  
 Whose woods lie fetter'd in their icy chains,  
 Whose piercing blasts deprive your dreary glades  
 Of the sweet fragrance of the southern shades,  
 To you, though distant, in his name I call ;  
 Oh live devoted to the Lord of All.  
 Your gates immortal to his grace unfold ;  
 And you'll exult in blessings yet untold,  
 In the high glories of perpetual hills,  
 In the sweet solace of celestial rills.

If no repugnance intercept the rays  
 Which rise to bless you with the best of days.  
 All wants redress'd, a brighter sun will glow,  
 And endless love in blissful union flow,

Your heart and hands in generous acts employ,  
And crown your labour with transcendant joy.

Ye stately fabrics in th' enamel'd fields,  
Where *art* improves what lovely *nature* yields ;  
Ye beauteous hills, for pearly fruits renown'd,  
Ye crowns of vines which deck their summit round,  
Ye wide canals which cost amazing toil,  
Ye streams which murmur o'er the flow'ry soil,  
Oh, since your lords, decoy'd with earthly views,  
Neglect the Giver, and the gifts misuse,  
Since peace fraternal yields to selfish strife,  
And graceful virtue to luxurious life,  
I leave, lamenting, your infected state,  
And waft my words to regions less elate.

Ye, then, who hold yon western hemisphere,  
Or whose long darkness ends your frigid year,  
Within your breasts your Author's love inclose,  
To thaw your ice, and melt your chilling snows.  
He courts a refuge in your nations. Chuse  
Him for your Lord, nor offer'd bliss refuse.  
His due reception renders every place  
Fair in his sight, and honour'd with his grace.  
He lifts aloft, and wings to bliss from woe  
A race of rebels in the world below,  
Broke from the bonds of coward fear and shame,  
By virtue fervent with celestial flame.

Ye fruitless tracts, whose hapless towns are thin,  
Oh, if he shield you from the shafts of sin ;  
His perfect goodness if your tribes revere,  
And to his laws, in spotless lives adhere ;  
Then all its wildness will the waste forego,  
Then clustering grapes for noxious brambles grow.  
But righteous judgment will at last surprise,  
If mortals, call'd, the gracious call despise.

END OF THE POEMS.

**APPENDIX :**  
CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF  
**FENELON,**  
ARCHBISHOP AND DUKE OF CAMBRAY;  
**MICHAEL DE MOLINOS,**  
AND  
**ST. TERESA.**  
ALSO, THE  
**METHOD OF PRAYER,**  
BY LADY GUION.



**THE LIFE**  
**OF**  
**FRANCIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE**  
**FENELON,**

*ARCHBISHOP AND DUKE OF CAMBRAY.\**

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HE was born at the castle of Fenelon, in Perigord, in the province of Guienne, in the south-west of France, in 1651, son of Pons de Salignac, Marquis of Fenelon, and Louisa de la Crote, sister of the Marquis of St. Abre. He was brought up in his father's house, till he was twelve years of age. This private education, in a remote province, preserved him from the corruption of manners and sentiments, which the young nobility of most nations too frequently contract, in acquiring the politeness and delicacy of the court.

In 1663, he was sent to the university of Cahors, in the same province, and afterward put under the care and instruction of a learned and pious uncle at Paris, viz. Antony, Marquis of Fenelon ; who, dreading for him the vanities of youth, made him take, (says the author of his history,) the resolution of imitating, for several years, the silence of Jesus Christ.

In 1686, Lewis XIV. King of France, having been informed of Fenelon's great abilities and virtues, named him the chief of a mission for the conversion of the Protestants on the coast of Saintonge and in the country of Aunis, in the aforesaid province of Guienne.

This History of the Life of the Archbishop of Cambray, was translated and abridged from a French work said to be written by the Chevalier Ramsay, author of "The Travels of Cyrus."



As the King had been advised to employ military force, to put an effectual stop to the diversity of religions in his kingdom, Abbe Fenelon, abhorring those maxims, would not enter upon this mission, but on condition that no troops should be employed therein. The mild and gentle treatment which the Protestants of those parts experienced, while their brethren in the neighbouring provinces were delivered up to the most cruel and inhuman persecutions, disposed them to hearken to the instructions of the new missionary, and to receive solid fruits from them. This way indeed did not make so many sudden conversions as force ; but it made them more sincere.

Having finished the mission, he returned to Paris, and presented himself before the King : but he was two years after without returning to court. He became equally noted for possessing fine parts and endeavouring to conceal them. His modesty, his retired disposition, his probity, and his inaction about striving to procure posts or benefices, or to court the favour of such as were consulted in their distribution, were the cause that, after having been nominated Bishop of Poitiers, he was struck off the list before the nomination was made public. The Archbishop of Paris had received him well, and treated him with great respect : but accustomed as he was to be surrounded with flatterers, and not finding Fenelon among them, his pride was offended. Meeting him one day, he said to him, " Sir, you have a mind to be forgotten, and you shall be so."

The Marquis of Fenelon, his uncle, had introduced him into the acquaintance of several illustrious persons at court, and among the rest the Duke of Beauvilliers, at whose request, having several daughters, Fenelon wrote a treatise on the education of daughters, wherein the talents with which he was endowed for forming youth became conspicuous.

This Duke, under great plainness and simplicity, concealed uncommon virtues ; an enemy of pride, divested of

ambition, unanxious for riches, he was modest, sedate, disinterested, liberal, courteous, sincere, polite, regular in every thing, and thereby well qualified to govern men. As a minister of state, the very basis of his politics was *the love of justice*. This was his reigning virtue, to which he sacrificed his own inclinations, his personal friendships, and even the interests of his own family. All these great qualities were heightened and perfected by an eminent piety, which ascribed every thing to God. This piety was in him a fruitful spring of light, to guide him in all his conduct: for, setting his heart free both from irregular passions and vain amusements, it poured in upon his mind continual supplies of clear discernment, to discover in every thing what was *right* and *good*.

Him the King made choice of for governor of his grandchildren: and the Duke making known the merit of Fenelon, the King nominated him to be preceptor to the eldest of the princes. The public in general applauded this choice, and especially Monsieur Bossuet the Bishop of Meaux; who wrote a letter of congratulation upon it to M. Fenelon, daughter of the aforesaid Marquis, expressing therein the high joy with which it filled his heart.

In 1689, Abbe Fenelon entered on his post at the age of thirty-eight years. For assisting in this education there were also chosen several persons of distinguished merit, as Abbe Fleury and others. Never was seen a greater harmony than in the education of this prince. All who were around him acted in concert, never to flatter him, never to take his part, when he had given cause to any of them to be displeased with him. He found no asylum but in obedience and the practice of his duties.

This prince in early youth was haughty, scornful, passionate and capricious. He afterwards grew up remarkably courteous, meek, pacific, just, and sensibly moved with the calamities and misfortunes of humanity, even denying

himself almost every thing to relieve the wants and distresses of others. His nature was so much and so happily changed for the better, by the good impressions made on his mind.

He looked on himself as designed for the sovereign authority, only to be the servant of the people, and to labour to render them good and happy. The method which they had made use of, to form the understanding and the heart of this young prince, is a model of the most perfect education.

To form his understanding, they made him study, not by rules, but according to the curiosity which they took care to excite in him. Hereby they turned amusements into study; and the most serious studies became an amusement. A conversation formed on purpose, without his perceiving it, gave occasion to the reading of an history, to the examination of a map, to reasonings within the comprehension of his years. The exercises set him were constantly solid instructions: some history or dialogue, which learned him the principal actions and events of antiquity, or of modern times, brought him acquainted with the characters of the great men of all ages, and at the same time inspired him with the love and desire of the purest virtues. *Telemachus* and the *Dialogues of the Dead* were written with this view.

To form his heart, it was necessary to reform his natural faults. The humour, impetuosity, and haughtiness of the young prince were repress by a dissatisfied look spread over every countenance.

The usual chastisements in inferior educations were never employed in this. The privation of a pleasure, of a walk, of a study itself of which they had raised in him an eager desire, were the only punishments they made use of.

In the time of his fiercest vivacities, all that approached him to serve him, had orders to do it in a melancholy

silence. Thus they left him vexed with himself, and meeting with none to pity him, till quite tired out with such a sad state, finding no body to speak to; he came to beg pardon, acknowledging his fault.

Candour in confessing every thing was the only condition of pardon; and to accustom him to that ingenuity, they confessed the faults which they had committed before him; drawing from their own imperfections matter of useful instruction to their pupil.

They inspired him with the love of virtue, not by dry precepts, moral sentences, or studied harangues; but by a word, a look, a sentiment properly placed, they were continually giving him lessons without his being disgusted at it, or even perceiving it. At meals, in their walks, in their discourses, they turned every thing into instruction. By imperceptible touches, and ingenious turns, they caused him every where to meet with noble sentiments and royal virtues. They joined to this knowledge, and to this love of truth, the great science of knowing how to keep a secret. To accustom him early to secrecy, they made him sensible, but with precaution, of a confidence above his age on the most important affairs.

During the whole time that Abbe Fenelon was at court, he shewed a most perfect disinterestedness. Having learned early to live content on a little, independent of that servility which a sordid love of interest begets, this habit of bounding his desires, joined to a divine love of the poverty of Jesus Christ, made him continue six years at court, in distinguished favour, without receiving or asking any emolument, either for himself or his friends. The public liberally deak out to him the places which became vacant, while he neither obtained nor sought for any of them.

At last the King gave him the Abbey of St. Vallery, making a kind of excuse to him, *for giving him so little and so late.*

Some months after, the Archbishoprick of Cambray becoming vacant, the King nominated him thereto. Abbe Fenelon, scrupulous on the subject of his duties, excused himself from accepting it, being afraid lest he could not reconcile the care of a diocese with the functions of his employ. But the King tried to remove all his objections, and urged his acceptance of this vacancy.

On his compliance therewith, he resigned the abbey of St. Vallery, without asking it for any of his friends or relations. The King was astonished at it, and pressed him to keep it, but in vain. This disinterestedness, so very unusual, drew upon him encomiums; but it also soured against him those persons of a distinguished rank whom his example condemned. He made no other use of his credit than to seek to eradicate the notions which the corrupters of kings instil into them of their grandeur and their power.

The high favour the new Archbishop was in, with the King, seemed to announce a still greater elevation; but there soon arose against him a storm which banished him from the court of France forever. To know the spring, the progress and the completion of his disgrace, we must speak of Madam Guion, who has been the pretext for it, and give a concise idea of her conduct and her sentiments. [Hereupon the Author gives a summary of the life of Lady Guion. In it he gives the following character of the Duke of Chevreuse, one of her intimate friends :

He had a rare stock of knowledge for a person of his rank, an easy eloquence, an extensive genius, capable of remounting in every thing to the first principles, and of forming the greatest designs. Bold in the execution, courageous against bad success, and against the disapprobation of those who did not penetrate the greatness of his designs; he was easy of access, graceful and modest. His politeness was noble, delicate and unaffected; his temper

sweet, affable, and engaging. He lived in his family with his children like a good friend, as well as a good father. His soul appeared always equal and calm, notwithstanding his natural vivacity. In a word, piety had united in him the virtues human and divine, to such a degree, that he was at the same time a good christian, a good citizen, and a perfect friend.]

Some envious people now spread confused rumours of a rising heresy gaining credit at court. They alarmed many with their outcries of *the danger of the church*, and particularly Monsieur Godet de Marais, Bishop of Chartres, a man of a lively nature, and fiery zeal for whatever he accounted sound doctrine.

Such a man was susceptible of very strong prejudices. They gave him a horrible idea of the new spirituality. To turn him from his indefatigable pursuits against Jansenism, a doctor of Sorbonne, one of that party, who yet concealed his sentiments, artfully represented to him Quietism (which had been so fiercely fallen upon at Rome some years before) as an object worthy of his episcopal zeal. He, not perceiving the snare, applied himself with all his might to thunder against the rising heresy, and to render Madam Guion suspected of its propagation. He induced Madam Maintenon, as he was her director, to change her sentiments. He made her conceive gross errors, and all the imaginary horrors of Quietism, in the little book entitled, *The short method of prayer*, which before this she had liked and approved. She then, who had treated Madam Guion with singular marks of esteem, became from henceforth her implacable enemy.

Abbe Fenelon met with Madam Guion at first, soon after her release from her first confinement, at the house of the Dutchess of Bethune, to whom she had been known from her earliest years. Before this he had been very much prejudiced against her, by the calumnies which were

so industriously spread, and through such hands as gained them a ready credit. But when he came to see and hear herself, her excellent conversation soon removed all his prejudices, and made him highly esteem her. Going afterward on some occasion to Montargis, he enquired there what reputation she had borne before her leaving that city. All expressed their high esteem of her piety, and the purity of her manners, even from her infancy. These testimonies, given by the most respectable persons, confirmed Fenelon in the high idea he had already conceived of her virtue.— And hence there was gradually formed between these two persons a very particular friendship, which afterwards proved for them both a source of great crosses, and of the exercise of great virtues.

When it was discovered that Madam Maintenon had openly and warmly declared herself against Madam Guion, they tried alike to turn her against the Abbe Fenelon, which was easily done; and the more, as the Abbe had already disappointed and displeased her, by speaking his mind to her honestly, yet with caution and reserve.

She had hoped at first to gain an absolute ascendant over him, but had the mortification of seeing him often dissent from her opinions. She was afraid lest a man, whom she could not secure to herself, should acquire too much credit with the King. This change in Madam Maintenon gave a fine opportunity to the Bishop of Meaux, to vent that secret jealousy which for a long time past he had nourished in his bosom against the Abbe Fenelon. Having been accustomed to see himself admired as the first genius of the age, he could not bear to observe the eyes of the public turned from him, and fixed on the Abbe.

The violent outcry against Madam Guion became universal. It seemed to affect the reputation of her friends. Madam Maintenon began then, in order to carry on her designs, to demand a strict examination of the books of

Madam Guion, and spoke of it to the King, who chose the Bishop of Meaux for principal examiner. To him were added the Bishop of Chalons, who is at present the Cardinal de Noailles, and Archbishop of Paris, and Monsieur Tromson. Madam Maintenon would have the Abbe Fenelon to be joined as the fourth, and the King approved of it.

The Bishop of Meaux had always maintained the contrary opinion to that of *pure disinterested love*. He thought he knew the doctrine of the Church better than any one else, and could not bear to be shewed that the tradition of the Church, on so essential a point, had escaped him.

After an examination of several months, they were scarce able to agree on any precise determination. The Bishop of Meaux was continually crying out, "The church was in danger." He probably thought it would add a new eclat to the glory of his triumphs over the Protestants, against whom he had published some pieces in print, to convict such a man as the Abbe Fenelon of error.\*

It would (says a certain writer,) have been an unpardonable weakness in him to have esteemed, and to have suffered his best friends to confide in a person of a suspicious conduct, or in whom nothing else was to be seen but fanaticism. We should then be obliged to own that his veneration for her had been a blemish in his character. It is therefore requisite that the public should find here at least something whereby to form an idea of that Lady's true character, and of the purity of her life, which was confirmed to the last, even by those who had taken the most pains to prove her guilty. Yet their rage against her furiously increased, when they found that certain persons of distinction

\* We have seen before how this violent Bishop of Meaux, conquered by the force of truth, had given Lady Guion a good certificate at the end of an examination of six months, how Madam Maintenon was vexed at it, how the Bishop himself, after the ill spirit revived in him, repented of that act of justice; and how that much injured good woman was, notwithstanding it all, arrested and carried a prisoner to the castle of Vincennes, near the end of the year 1695. See Life of Lady Guion, p. 388.



about the court placed their confidence in her. The sudden retired change of life in these persons, who before had been very conversant in the world, appeared to the directors, who were alarmed at the good done by her, to be an invasion of their prerogatives, and of dangerous consequence if suffered.

The Archbishop had been brought acquainted with this Lady when she was calumniated and persecuted. His prejudice against her was changed into a singular veneration for her, as soon as he had conversed with, and examined her. When afterwards he was attacked on this account, he did not disown that he had very much esteemed and still continued to esteem her : and yet he never undertook to defend her, but contented himself with constantly refusing to join in condemning her. When he was pressed to do it, he defended himself, acknowledging that he had often seen her, as every body knew ; that he had esteemed her, and suffered her to enjoy the esteem of several eminent persons, whose reputation was dear to the church : that he had read enough of her writings to think it his duty to examine her very strictly ; that he had often done it at a time when, having nothing to fear, she was the more open with him, and free to disclose all her inmost sentiments—that he had very narrowly observed her practice, and the counsels she gave to the most ignorant, and had never discovered the least footsteps of those bad maxims which were now ascribed to her. How then could he in conscience, he asked her enemies, charge her with them, by authorizing with an approbation, the defamations which were published against her ?

In a letter to a friend, he wrote, “ The Bishops who condemn her, have done it by writings which they have published : they have since confined her, and loaded her with ignominy ; I have never said one word either to justify or excuse her, or to alleviate her present condition ; and

is not that going a great way, considering all that I know? the least that I can do for an unfortunate person, whose conversation was always edifying to me, is to keep silence whilst others condemn her."

But this silence was not sufficient for those who wanted of him a public approbation, which might serve to justify their censures against her writings, and their severity towards her person. His constant refusal, provoked them, and became an occasion of their falling upon himself. It was already seen by their manner of proceeding against Madam Guion, that he was rather the object they aimed at than herself.

In the course of that same year, things were carried with a high hand, (probably either to gain favour with Madam Maintenon, or to avoid the dreaded consequences of her displeasure.) The bishops of Meaux, Chartres, and Chalons, published pastoral letters against Quietism, condemning also the books of Madam Guion. The last, indeed, did it with much more moderation than the two others. "In blaming," says he, "the excesses of the false mystics, let us ever admire and commend those of the true saints, to which the love of God carries their souls, which never can be carried too far: since the measure of loving God is to love him without measure." Thus, while he proscribed the books, he was far from condemning the person of Madam Guion, whom he treated with respect, telling her, "that, in submitting her expressions, she might continue her sentiments, and that he should pray to God to continue his favours to her."

The hatred of Madam Maintenon to the Archbishop of Cambray every day increased. As he could not be prevailed upon to condemn Madam Guion, as the other prelates had done, she regarded his refusal as an intolerable obstinacy.

The Archbishop of Cambray wrote a book in vindication of Madam Guion's tenets, entitled, *the maxims of the saints*, and in his absence the Duke of Chevreuse published it.

The Archbishop's enemies took care immediately to give a general alarm, to frighten the pious and well meaning, and to excite the derision of the profane. The prelates who were in the highest credit at court exclaimed against him. The courtiers, who envied the high favour which the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse enjoyed, now conceived great hopes that they would be involved in his disgrace. All things concurred together to swell the storm; learning, ignorance, industry, policy, insinuation, dispute, credulity, nay incredulity itself; and all this, because a prelate had dared to maintain, *that we ought to love God for his own sake, with a pure disinterested love.* These outcries having at length reached the King's ears, the Bishop of Meaux went to wait on him, asking his pardon for not having sooner disclosed to him "the fanaticism of his brother prelate."

This bishop drew the most horrible consequences from the Archbishop's principles, loudly declaring, "that the sentiments he concealed were worse than those expressed in his book." Such discourses of a Bishop, eminent for his capacity, venerable for his age, and esteemed a father in the church, did not fail to spread a general alarm, and to cause a furious outcry of doctors, priests and monks, with people of all sorts and conditions, against the Archbishop of Cambray, who offered all along to make additions to his book, to explain every thing in it which gave offence, and to clear up every ambiguity: but nothing would satisfy the Bishop of Meaux less than *a formal recantation.*

The Archbishop, seeing all reasonable means of accommodation opposed, addressed the King, and represented the hard situation he was in, the expedients he had proposed in order to peace, the refusal given him of examining his

book, and in fine, that he had no way left to put an end to the scandal which these disputes occasioned, but by applying to the Pope ; begging leave of the King to go in person to Rome. The King gave orders to tell him, that he might transmit his cause to Rome, but without going thither himself.

The Archbishop had been advised and urged by several to give up his book entirely : but as he firmly believed it to be the truth which that book contained, he could by no means agree thereto, till the sovereign Pontiff, to whom he had submitted it, should pronounce sentence upon it. This refusal was represented to the King, as the criminal obstinacy of a man incapable of submitting.

By these impressions the King was induced to order his confinement to his diocese, to deprive his relations of their employments, and to banish his friends from court.\* Nobody had any intimacy with, or interest in him, without

\* Before he left Paris, he wrote to the Duke of Beauvilliers a letter dated the 3d of August, 1697, from which I present the reader with the following extracts :

"Be in no pain, my Lord, or concern for me. The affair of my book is carried to Rome. If I am mistaken, the authority of the Holy See will undeceive me, which is what I seek for with an humble and resigned heart. I am going to Cambray, having sacrificed to God all that I am capable of sacrificing to him. Permit me to exhort you to enter into the same spirit. Nothing worldly or temporal has had any share in what I have done for the doctrine I have judged to be true ; nor have I omitted to lay before the Pope any of the reasons which may support that doctrine. Enough has been done on my part ; it belongs to God to do the rest, if it is his cause that I have defended. Let us neither regard the designs of men, nor the steps they take ; 'tis God alone we should look up to in all this. Let us be the children of peace, and peace will rest upon us ; if it be bitter it will be only the more pure. Let us not mar the uprightness of our intentions by any obstinacy, any passionate warmth, any human industry, any over-earnest desire to justify ourselves. Only let us give an account of our faith, let us correct ourselves if we have need of it, and let us bear correction patiently, even though we should not deserve it. Let us humble ourselves, and keep silence : and instead of reasoning upon prayer, let us take care that we pray. 'Tis thus that we defend ourselves ; 'tis in silence that our strength will lie."

This letter at large was immediately made public, and every body admired the pacific disposition of the good Archbishop. What danger had any to fear from a man who feared to deceive himself, and who wished to be set right.

sharing his disgrace. The superiority of his understanding, and the purity of his life were utterly disregarded. His intimate friend, Madame Guion, was to pass for a whimsical enthusiastic woman, and himself for the Patriarch of a senseless and profane sect. How profound a humiliation was this! But it is only by a total overturning and annihilation of the whole man, that we can arrive at those divine virtues of which Jesus Christ, covered with ignominy and shame, was the perfect example and model.

The King having sent word to the Archbishop to retire to his diocese, and not to come back without his order; he left the court the next day. The young Duke of Burgundy expressed a most lively concern for the disgrace of his dear and worthy tutor.

In the mean time great pains were taken at Rome against him by his enemies. He sent thither his defences in manuscript: but the Cardinals signified to him, "That it was impossible to provide all the members of the holy office with such long memoirs, and that as the accusations against him were made public in France, it was necessary his defences should be so too." He then sent them to the press. Under all the violence raised against him on every side, he continued still and quiet. The Bishop of Meaux, who before had pretended so high a regard for him, was now most furious, hot and indefatigable in his persecution.

I shall not here display the epithets with which he characterized not only the doctrine but the person of the Archbishop, who never offered any thing in reply but sound reason and argument, preserving always the meekness of a Christian with the gravity of a bishop.\*

\* The following is a letter of his to the Bishop of Meaux:

"I pray God from the very bottom of my heart, that he may no otherwise give his perfect love a complete victory over you, than by making you feel it with all its charms. May you be inflamed and consumed by that celestial fire which you seek to extinguish! May it inspire you with the zeal of kindling it every where, and may it raise you to that height of perfection from which you are endeavouring to estrange others!"

The Bishop of Meaux, finding no success in his disputes upon doctrine, had recourse to facts. He published an account of Quietism, in which he endeavoured to make the Archbishop of Cambray pass for the blind admirer of a fanatical woman. The Archbishop answered this piece with so much strength, and at the same time with such extraordinary moderation, as quite turned the public in general against the Bishop of Meaux, and filled the people with indignation against him, from the clear discovery of the wily arts by which he had endeavoured to substitute ridiculous phantoms in the place of truth.

The ministers of the court at Rome used their utmost endeavours to quiet the storm, and to avoid giving a decisive judgment against a prelate of so venerable a character. The book was put into the hands of the Consulters of the holy office, who were ten in number. They held their assemblies for near eight months, wrought at it with extraordinary application, and were at last divided in their sentiments. Five were of opinion to censure the book, and the other five maintained its doctrine to be sound. The Archbishop of Chietti, one of the Consulters, loudly declared, "that they ought either to burn the books of Saint Francis de Sales, or allow that of Monsieur de Cambray." But as they could not agree, the affair was at last brought before the holy office.

The Pope ordered three congregations to be held every week; and the Cardinals were ten months examining and discussing the whole. The Archbishop's adversaries were supported at Rome with all the credit which their situation in France could give them. They now had recourse to a stroke, which was judged necessary to let them see at Rome how much the court of France, which openly solicited the condemnation of the book, had the affair at heart. They prevailed on the King to dismiss the relations and friends of the Archbishop of Cambray, from their attend-

ance on the princes. They disposed of the Archbishop's apartment at Versailles, which till this time had not been done. And both himself and the rest who were dismissed on this occasion were struck off the state list, and denied the salaries which were given (during life) to such persons as had been honoured with any share in the education of the princes of France. They would have done the same by some of the most honourable persons about the court; (viz. the Duke of Beauvilliers, Chevreuse, &c.) but they found upon trial their power, credit and interest, did not reach so far, those persons being too well established, and no occasion sufficient for their purpose to be found against them. The temper which the good Archbishop maintained in the midst of so violent a storm appears in the following letter, which he wrote to the Duke of Beauvilliers, at a time when it raged most furiously against him :

"I cannot avoid telling you, my good Duke, what I have at heart. Yesterday I spent the day in devotion and prayer for the King. I did not ask for him any temporal prosperity; for of that he has enough. I only begged that he might make a good use of it, and that, amidst such great success, he might be as humble as if he had undergone some deep humiliation. I begged that he might not only fear God and respect religion, but that he might also love God, and feel how easy and light his yoke is to those who bear it less through fear than love. I never found in myself a greater degree of zeal, or if I may venture to use the expression, of affection to his person. Though I am full of acknowledgement, it was not the good he has done me that then moved me. Far from being under any uneasiness at my present situation, I would have offered myself with joy to God, for the sanctification of the King. I even considered his zeal against my book as a commendable effect of his religion, and his just abhorrence of whatever has to him the appearance of novelty. I looked upon him as an

object of the favour of God. I called to mind his education, without solid instruction, the flatteries which have surrounded him, the snares laid for him in his youth, the profane counsels that were given him, the distrust that was with so much pains instilled into him against the excesses of certain professors of devotion, and the artifice of others; and lastly the perils of greatness, and such a multiplicity of nice affairs. I own, that with all these things in view, I had great compassion for a soul so much exposed. I judged his case deserved to be lamented, and I wished him a more plentiful degree of mercy to support him in so formidable a state of prosperity. In all this I had not, as I apprehended, the least interested view; for I would have consented to a perpetual disgrace, provided I knew that the King was entirely after God's own heart. I only desire he may have solid virtues, and such as are suitable to the duties of his station. For my own part I am at peace, in the midst of almost continual sufferings. By casting scandal upon me, they shall not, by God's will, exasperate me; neither shall they discourage me; they will not make me an heretic, by saying that I am one. I thank God I breathe nothing but sincerity, and submission without reserve. After laying my reasons before the Pope, my conscience will be discharged, and I shall have nothing more to do than be silent and obey. They shall never see me, as some others have done, seek for distinctions to elude the censures of Rome. There would have been no occasion to have gone thither, if the affair had been carried on with that equity, fair dealing, and christian charity, which they owed to their brother. I pray God to undeceive me, if I am under a mistake, and if I am not, that he will open the eyes of those who have confided too much in passionate persons."

The Pope, being favourably inclined toward the Archbishop's book, made a proposal which was presently re-



jected aloud by the Cardinal Casa Nata, intimating that it would create a misunderstanding between Rome and France. At last the judgment so long expected, after an examination of eighteen months, came forth. Pope Innocent XII. published a brief condemning the book with twenty-three propositions extracted out of it. Hereupon the Archbishop gave himself up immediately to the most absolute submission.\*

He wrote hereupon a letter to his dear friend the Duke of Beauvilliers, a part of which is as follows :

“ What you send me word you have done in obedience to the Pope, by parting with my book, is very edifying to me, and by no means surprising : I know your attachment to a strict obedience, nor could I expect any other conduct from you. You know very well, Sir, that I never valued or countenanced any piety which has not this solid foundation. For my own part, I endeavour to bear my cross with humility and patience. Amidst so many troubles I have one consolation, of little consequence in the eyes of the world, but a solid comfort to those who seek God with sincerity, and that is, my conduct is entirely fixed, nor have I any thing more to deliberate upon ; all that is left for me to do is, to submit and be silent ; and this is what I have

\* He published a mandate in which, speaking of the Pope's brief, he says, “ We adhere to this brief, my very dear brethren, as well with respect to the text of the book, as to the twenty-three propositions, and condemn both the book and them, precisely, absolutely, and without any restriction. Farther, we forbid all the faithful of this diocese to read and keep the said book. We would comfort ourselves, my very dear brethren, in our humiliation, provided the ministry of the word which we have received of the Lord for your sanctification be not weakened thereby ; and that, notwithstanding the humiliation of the pastor, the flock may grow in grace in the sight of God. May it please God, that my name may never be mentioned, but with this remembrance, that a pastor had thought it his duty to be more submissive than the least sheep in his flock. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, my very dear brethren, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, remain with you all. Amen.

Given at Cambray, April 9, 1699.”

ever desired; as my conscience is discharged in that of my superior. In all this, far from considering it as brought upon me by my adversaries, I look not on any man: I see only the hand of God, and am content with what he does. Sometimes I am importuned with long letters of exhortation, advising me to submit, and telling me how glorious such an humiliation will be; I am tempted to say within myself, what is it then that I have done to these people, that they should think I shall find so much difficulty in preferring the authority of the Holy See to my own weak understanding, and the peace of the church to my book? I have no consolation but in obedience: and if they had known my sentiments in this respect, they would never have had the vain alarms they have suffered themselves to fall into.

“As to the Bishop of Meaux, he and I have no longer any contention. I very sincerely pray for him, and wish him all that may be wished for those whom we love according to God.”

He also in a letter to the Bishop of Arras wrote thus:

“My superior, by the decision he has made, has discharged my conscience. I have now nothing more to do than to rest in peace, and bear my cross in silence.”

Some people looked on the Archbishop's submission as a stroke of policy. But on this subject, says the author, I shall repeat what I have had from his own mouth:

“My submission was not a stroke of policy, or a silence in respect to men, but an interior act of obedience paid to God alone. I looked on the judgment of my superiors as an echo of the Supreme will. I did not stop to consider the passions, the prejudice, the disputes which preceded my condemnation. I heard God speaking, as unto Job, out of the midst of the whirlwind, and saying to me, *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* and I answered them from the bottom of my heart, *Since I have spoken unadvisedly, what can I answer? I will lay my hand*

*upon my mouth.* Since that time I have sought no shelter in the vain subterfuges of the 'Questions of fact and of right.\* I submitted to my condemnation in its full extent."

The Archbishop's enemies now made pressing application to the Pope, by the French court, to condemn likewise his apologetical writings: but the sovereign Pontiff, with a resolution not to be shaken, refused to do it; though these writings were dispersed in Rome, and the doctrine of "pure love" was more amply unfolded in them than in his *book of maxims*.

Very soon did the Archbishop send his submission to the Pope, who wrote him a letter, commending both his doctrine and his piety, and gave orders to Cardinal Spada to dispatch it. But the Cardinals of the Bishop of Meaux's party, representing that France might take umbrage at such a letter, prevailed on the Pope to blot out several parts of it. Soon after the Pope made three of the five examiners, who had voted against censuring the *book of maxims*, Cardinals. The King sent orders to all his Archbishops to assemble their suffragans, to receive the Pope's brief. In these synods the Archbishop of Cambrai was well or ill treated, according as there were found at them more or fewer Bishops devoted to the court; but no where worse than in his own palace, by his own suffragans, one of whom, viz. the Bishop of St. Omers, told him, that his words did not express an inward consent and acquiescence, but still left him a back door to withdraw from his submission.

The Archbishop took no offence at so odious an accusation. Not in the least discomposed, with meekness he thus delivered himself to his suffragans:

"You are assembled here not to examine my ordinance or mandate, but to do all of you jointly what I have been

\* The "question of right" is, whether the propositions condemned are true or not. The "question of fact" is, whether those propositions are really contained, or not, in the book wherein they are pretended to be found.

doing in particular. I shall declare to you with an entire openness, as to my brethren, and not as to my judges, that, with the whole extent of my heart, I have renounced all thoughts of explaining my book : I prefer the authority of the Holy See to my feeble lights. I have endeavoured, by words fully submissive and humble, to accept the humiliation which is come upon me from the sovereign Pontiff. If his holiness thinks my submission defective, I am ready to supply the defect, and to make it in such manner as the Holy See shall think proper."

About a year after this was held an assembly of the clergy, at St. Germain en Laye. Here the Bishop of Meaux accused the Archbishop of Cambray, of being the patriarch of a sect whose maxims were not only inconsiderate, but impious ; not only dangerous in practice, but blasphemous in theory ; not only erroneous, but absolutely heretical.

He drew up an abridgement of "the new spirituality," as he calls the tenets of Fenelon and Guion, which begins thus, "The salvation we hope for by Jesus Christ, the eternal glory, the enjoyment of God, the beatific vision, appear things of too low a nature to move and affect such souls as are arrived at the *pure love*."

Abbe Fenelon on this head declares that, if only the hope of reward be the motive of actions and conduct, it is a selfish motive, leaving little or no room for the celestial flame of pure charity, or the love of God for his own sake, the love of his perfections, the single desire of rectitude in all states and trials, which includes that of divine approbation and union. Such a motive, he observes, falls short of inspiring us with any noble virtue, and often leaves men without remedy against vice ; it fails of being a support in times of trial. He represents a man who acts upon this principle, in the time of temptation, speaking thus :

"The heavenly sweetness has forsaken me.—I expected

to be delivered from all my weaknesses by the efficacious power of a delicious and invincible grace. I looked upon the life of a Christian to be a religious enchantment. I pleased myself with the thoughts of going straight to Paradise, in a way strewn with roses. I wept for joy. Heaven seemed already open to receive me. I blessed God for having put me under a necessity in this life, to be happy in the other. But alas! how great is my disappointment! The source of pious pleasure is dried up. I feel no other but what is vicious and corrupt; and it is as impossible for me, in my present condition, to resist the victorious pleasure of vice, as it is to ride post without a horse."

From hence Abbe Fenelon concludes that there is a love of order, of *absolute pulchritude* and *perfection*, superior to all *agreeable sensation*, which can act in us when the sensible pleasures and consolation of grace are wanting, and which is sufficient to move the will, under all the pains and privations which are to be met with in the sacred path of piety; there being no virtue without trials, no merit in goodness when it lasts no longer than while it is caressed, or when it is only practised for the sake of rewards.

"Thus it was," says he, "that the saints in imitation of their great model, remained faithful to God under the most terrible sufferings. Under the purifying pains of love they continued steadfast in their submission to the divine will, not because it was delightful, but because it was just.—The spring by which God then moved them was not any impression of pleasure, but the pure knowledge he gave them of what was due to him. Often were they deprived of all consolation, both heavenly and earthly, so as to cry out with their holy head, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*"

Thus the Archbishop of Cambray, excessively humbled, covered with shame, banished and confined to his diocese, enjoyed there that profound peace of mind which never

fails to accompany pure virtue. He applied himself wholly to make men good and happy, discharging with great diligence and tenderness all the functions of his episcopal character.\*

It was now, and from henceforward to the end of his days, that he appeared to be one of the true children (in the faith) of the worthy Lady Guion.

The French writer of his history informs us, that all the sermons he preached flowed from the abundance of his heart, without being written or premeditated. Only he retired into his closet, to draw his light from Heaven in prayer. Like Moses the friend of God, he went first upon

\* A certain famous writer made an offer to the Archbishop to write in his defence; acquainting him, that a book was prepared for his justification, and nothing requested of him but to consent and contribute to its impression. To this he answered:

"You propose to me to send money for the printing of a book, in justification of my faith—you may easily believe I should value little the expence: as I was diligent to write in my own defence before the judgment of Rome, so I am resolved since that judgment, to be silent, to suffer in peace, and give up my reputation to Providence. I had rather die than defend, either directly or indirectly, a book which I have condemned without restriction, and from the bottom of my heart, in compliance with the Holy See. Whatever I should write would be looked upon as a design to rekindle the war. I know too well what scandal the church suffers by such disputes, to have any inclination to renew them from a regard for my own reputation. God will take care of the honour of his minister, if he deigns to make use of it for the benefit of the ministry in his diocese. No treatise would persuade those who have no mind to be persuaded. And you know very well, that there would be a double-dealing, unworthy of a Christian, in declining to write myself, and yet privately acting in concert with another who should write for me."

The readiness and simplicity of his submission had surprised the King. They had prejudiced him, by representing the Archbishop of Cambray as a man of an uncomplying temper, who would never submit. Whereas he now saw the contrary, and the remembrance of all his virtues recurred to his mind. His virtues, indeed, during his residence at court, had in them something of austerity. It was this stiff part of virtue, which the hammer of adversity was to mollify by an abasement.—This change had been foretold him, (most probably by Madam Guion) but it was not entirely effected till the latter part of his life. A stranger, who passed through Cambray out of a desire to see him, let fall this memorable expression, *I have formerly seen great men great, but I have now seen a great man little!*

the holy mountain, and then returned to the people to communicate to them what he had learned in that ineffable conversation. An ardent love of God was the great point in these public exhortations of his, in which he made every thing terminate, such a love as produces and perfects all virtues. His preaching was very plain and intelligible. He banished from it all abstracted reasonings and superfluous ornaments, and sought only to speak as a good father, to comfort, relieve and enlighten his flock.

He was diligent in going round his diocese, preaching in every church in it, examining his flock, instructing and exhorting both priests and people, and taking all possible care in regard to both; ready also to listen to the advice of any, and to profit by their experience. "The shepherd, (he used often to say) has yet more need of being docile than the flock; he must be continually *learning*, that he may be the more able to *teach*, and ready to *obey*, in order to govern well. *The wise man increases in wisdom by all that he gathers from others.*"

All his practice beautifully exemplified his doctrine. Though rigid and severe to himself, he affected not however an austere air, nothing sour, morose, or critical, but all quite the reverse; cheerful and amiable to others in all his deportment. He endeavoured much to imitate our great model, whose affability to the simple gave offence to the Pharisees of his time.

All the pomp and grandeur of his Archiepiscopal rank he renounced, humbling himself like a child, or like a servant of God and of mankind. He slept little, eat less, and allowed himself no pleasure but what he found in the discharge of his duty. To take the air was his only recreation, during the whole time he was Archbishop of Cambray. And even when he did that, he spent the whole time in seeking occasions to do good to the people in the country around him.

When he met with them, he sometimes would sit down with them upon the grass, inquire about the state of their families, give them advice how to regulate their little affairs, but above all things affectionately recommend to them to lead a religious life. He sometimes went into their cottages to speak to them of God, and to comfort and relieve them under the hardships they suffered. If those poor people presented him with any refreshments after their homely country fashion, he did not disdain to taste what was set before him, that he might give them a mark of his friendship. He shewed no false delicacy with regard either to the poverty of their condition, or the uncleanness of their habitations. He became in a manner one of them, through the fatherly tenderness of a heart deeply affected with the love of a Saviour, poor and naked.

Hence he learned what is so very difficult to human nature to learn, viz. to be poor in the midst of plenty. He gave almost all his revenue either to useful public occasions, or to persons in distress, of all ranks and all nations, who (during the calamities of the great war then carried on between the French and Bavarians on one side, and the English, Dutch, Austrians, and their allies, on the other) were within the reach of his generosity.

While the Archbishop of Cambray was employed in his diocese in discharging his duties, the war which France continued to maintain with great difficulties, drew near to the city where he resided. The neighbourhood of Cambray became the theatre of the last campaigns. In the midst of two immense armies, consisting of the greatest forces of almost all Europe, and the most illustrious commanders, he saw himself once more become a spectacle. The court of Versailles resounded all the winter with the accounts given of him, at their return, by the general officers and courtiers who had been in the army.

They all agreed to publish the order of his household,



and the munificence which kept it open to all comers; his profusions for the succour of the sick and wounded, with whom he filled all his apartments: the sanctuary which whole villages found at the same time within the inclosure of his palace, whither they fled for refuge from the desolated country; the care he took of the poorest of those wretched people, who were no less the objects of his concern, than the persons of distinction, which his house was always full of.

Amidst all this incumbrance he found means to leave all his guests to their own liberty, and to allow himself time withal for the discharge of all his occupations, of what kind soever they were. Every one was admitted to interrupt him, without any hindrance to the carrying on of his business; so well he knew how to find time for every thing. He charmed the hearts of all the soldiers.

Not only all his own palace, but other houses beside, hired by him on purpose, were filled with the sick and wounded from the army, and every thing provided both for their cure and nourishment. Most people would have thought such an expense excessive, at a time when his revenues were very much lessened by the neighbourhood of the two armies: but the necessities of the unfortunate were the only measure of his liberality.

Neither the painful sight of the wretched condition of the refugees in his palace, nor their infectious distempers, could abate his zeal. He walked up and down among them like a good father, and testified by his sighs how much his heart was moved with compassion. His presence and his words seemed to alleviate their miseries.

The veneration in which he was held was not confined to the French army alone. He was no less respected by the enemy. The Duke of Marlborough, Prince Eugene, and the Duke of Ormond, seemed to study to shew him all sorts of civilities. They sent detachments of their men

to guard his meadows and his corn. They caused his grain to be transported with a convoy to Cambray, lest it should be seized and carried off by their own foragers.

When any party of the enemy heard that he was to take a journey within his own diocese, they sent him word he had no need of a French convoy, that they would escort him themselves. Even the very Hussars of the Imperial troops did not fail to do him this service. Such a commanding power has true virtue, when it is once become manifest as his was, over all hearts. He was no where ill-treated and calumniated, but in his own country. All the other nations of Europe held him in equal veneration. He loved and made much of strangers. He received them with a singular cordiality, whatever religion they happened to be of.

The duties of hospitality became a laborious work to him, by reason of the vast numbers who came to see him, and the multiplicity of his other employments; yet he went through all with perfect kindness and tranquility. Nothing was more worthy of admiration than the facility with which he suffered himself to be interrupted in any business he was about, that he might communicate himself to all, and give himself up entirely to the discharge of those duties which daily, and even hourly occurred, as it were by surprise, and unexpectedly, for the exercise of his patience and meekness. An ordinary virtue is disconcerted and fretted, when it cannot pursue its rules and methods: his was noble and free, not a slave to times or places.

"I have seen him," says our author, "in the space of one day, converse with the great, and speak their language, ever maintaining the episcopal dignity; afterwards discourse with the simple and the little, like a good father instructing his children. This sudden transition, from one extreme to the other, was without affectation or effort, like

one who, by the extensiveness of his genius, reaches to all the most opposite distances.

"I have often observed him at such conferences, and have as much admired the evangelical condescension by which he became all things to all men, as the sublimity of his discourses. While he watched over his flock with a daily care, he prayed in the deep retirement of internal solitude. The many things which were generally admired in him were nothing in comparison of that divine life, by which he *walked with God*, like Enoch, and was unknown to men."

The Pagan philosophers were sensible that man can never be happy, till he arrive at "such an inward tranquillity as excludes not only unprofitable actions, but even useless thoughts." 'Tis, however, Christianity alone that can raise us to such a state, by that peace of the Holy Spirit, that divine unity, which the Gospel imparts.

This is that quietude which the Archbishop of Cambray aspired after, while employed in discharging the duties of humanity, religion, and his vocation. He dismissed, as fast as they arose, all useless ideas and disquieting desires, to the end that he might preserve his soul pure and in peace; taken up with God, detached from every thing not divine. This brought him to such a simplicity, as to be far from valuing himself for his natural talents, *accounting all but dross, that he might win Christ, and be found in him.*

Amongst his meditations is the following:

"I adore thee, O infant Jesus, naked, weeping, and lying in the manger. Thy childhood and poverty are become my delight. Oh that I could be thus poor, thus a child, like thee! O eternal Wisdom, reduced to the condition of a little babe, take from me my vain and presumptuous wisdom. Make me a child with thee. Be silent, ye sages of the earth. I wish to know nothing, but to be all faith, to be resigned to suffer every thing, to lose and forsake

all. 'The word made flesh! now silent, now he has an imperfect utterance, now weeps as a child: and shall I set up for being wise? Shall I take a complacency in my own schemes and systems? Shall I be afraid lest the world should not have an opinion high enough of my capacity? No, no, all my pleasure shall be *to decrease*, to become little and obscure, to live in silence; to bear the reproach of Jesus crucified, and to add thereto the helplessness and imperfect utterance of Jesus a child."

To die thus to all his own abilities must have been a thing more painful to him than to another. He understood thoroughly the principles of almost all the liberal sciences. He had studied the ancients of all kinds, poets, orators, and philosophers. He was well acquainted both with their faults and with their beauties. Yet he rejected that pompous erudition, which so powerfully tends to swell the mind with pride. He thought it his duty to renounce all the false riches of the mind, and to be wise with sobriety. This is what the doctors, who are ever contending about frivolous questions, will never be able to comprehend.

He saw the faults of his friends, and bore them with great mildness and sweetness of temper. He waited the proper moment of speaking, laid hold of it when it came; and knew how to season his advice in such a manner, that the most unpleasing truths from him could give no offence.

"It is often," said he, "our own imperfection which makes us reprove the imperfections of others, a sharp sighted self-love of our own which cannot pardon the self-love of others. The passions of other men seem insupportable to him who is governed by his own. Divine charity makes great allowances for the weaknesses of others, bears with them, and treats them with gentleness and condescension. It is never over hasty in its proceeding. The less we have of self-love, the more easily we accommodate ourselves to the imperfections of others, in order to cure them patiently,

when the right season arrives for it. Imperfect virtue is apt to be sour, severe, and implacable. Perfect virtue is meek, affable, and compassionate. It thinks of nothing but doing good, bearing others' burdens. It is this principle of disinterestedness with regard to ourselves, and of compassion for others, which is the true bond of society."

Whatever frankness he used at any time in speaking to his friends, he desired them to use the same to him. To one of them he wrote as follows:

"I request you not to spare me in telling me my faults. Though you should think you discover a fault in me, which perhaps I have not, the misfortune will not be great. If your intimations offend me, I shall see thereby that you have reached the quick. Thus you will do me a great kindness, by inuring me to reproof, and to a christian lowliness of spirit. The higher I am raised in rank, the more I ought to be humbled. I have need of this simplicity; and I hope that, far from weakening our union, it will be a means to strengthen it."

During the whole time of his exile, he scarce ever had a sight of any of his old friends. But he realized their presence, by the tender affection of a heart which unites itself to what it loves in the divine immensity.

"Let us all dwell," says he in one of his letters, "in our only centre, where we continually meet, and are all but one and the same thing. We are very near, though we see not one another; whereas others, who even live in the same house, yet live at a great distance. God reunites all, and brings together the remotest points of distance in the hearts that are united in him. I am for nothing but unity. All counted beyond that proceeds from division; it speaks a plurality, *self* in each too much fondled. The being deprived of seeing you does not fail to affect me very sensibly: but I must bear it patiently so long as God sees fit, and even till death, if it be his pleasure."

Thus it was divine love, which was in him an inexhaust-

ible source of the purest, most generous friendship. "Oh what a beautiful sight," said he frequently, "to see all kinds of goods in common, nobody looking on his own knowledge, virtues, joys, riches, as his peculiar property! It is thus that the saints in heaven possess every thing in God, without having any thing of their own. It is the flux and reflux of an infinite ocean of good, common to all, which satiates their desires and completes their happiness. They are perfectly rich and happy by being perfectly poor. If this poverty of spirit prevailed here below, we should hear no more those cold words of *mine* and *thine*. We should be all at the same time both poor and rich in unity."

Towards the end of 1709, a young prince visited and spent some time with him at his palace, and, in divers conversations they had together, listened to him with great veneration and docility. The Archbishop recommended to him especially, never to compel his subjects to change their religion. "Liberty of thought," said he to him, "is an impregnable fortress which no human power can force. Violence can never convince: it only makes hypocrites. When kings take upon them to direct in matters of religion, instead of protecting it, they bring it into bondage. You ought therefore to grant to all a legal toleration, not as approving every thing indifferently, but suffering with patience what God suffers, and endeavouring to restore such as are misled, by soft and gentle persuasion."

Many other good counsels he gave him on the government of his people. Thus on every occasion, he endeavoured to promote the happiness of other nations, considering himself as a citizen of the world.

He lived almost always in an intimate union with his pupil the Duke of Burgundy. It was some years after the Archbishop's banishment, before this young prince had means to write to him. But at length having found an opportunity, he wrote to him, being then nineteen years of age, as follows:

“VERSAILLES, *December, 22, 1701.*

“At length, my dear Archbishop, after four years silence, I have found an opportunity of writing. I have suffered many afflictions since our separation ; but one of the greatest has been that of not being able to give you any proof of my affection for you all this while; and how much your misfortunes instead of lessening my friendship, have increased it. I look forward with pleasure to the time when I shall be able to see you again ; but I fear it is yet very far off. I have been much grieved at all the ill usage you have met with : but we must submit to the divine will, and believe that all has come to pass for our good.”

After this the Prince frequently corresponded with the Archbishop, who wrote back to him as follows :

“Offspring of Saint Lewis ! Be like him, mild, humane, easy of access, affable, compassionate and liberal. Let your grandeur never hinder you from condescending to the lowest of your subjects, to put yourself in their place ; yet so, that this goodness may never weaken your authority, nor lessen their respect. True virtue is often modest and retired. Princes have need of her, and therefore ought to seek her out. Suffer not yourself to be beset by insinuating flatterers. Place no confidence but in those who have the courage to contradict you with respect, and who love your prosperity and reputation better than your favour.— Make yourself to be loved by the good, feared by the bad, and esteemed by all. Hasten to reform yourself, that you may labour with success in the reformation of others.”

There was one day in the year in which the Archbishop usually visited a certain town in his diocese, to perform an office of devotion. This was known in the army of the allies, and he could not go without passing very near their camp. Upon this they took such measures, that the detachments which were posted on the road might bring him to the camp, that they might have the satisfaction of see-

ing and hearing him. He had notice of it; but did not think that either his character as a subject of the King, with whom they were at war, or his state of banishment into his own diocese, which still subsisted, at least as to the order which had been given him, and which he had never taken pains to have revoked, would admit of his yielding to the design they had upon him. Whatever there was in this adventure to gratify his vanity, it had no effect upon him, and therefore he put off the journey he intended. If the generals of the allies were at any time informed, that any place which lay near their army belonged peculiarly to him, they immediately set guards upon it, and preserved the corn and the wood, with the same care as if it had been the property of one of the most considerable among themselves. And these places, thus protected upon his account, became places of refuge to the whole neighbourhood. At the close of the campaign in 1711, the army of the allies was in such a position, as to lie within view of the ramparts of Cambray, and between the army of France and the little town of Chateau-Cambresis, which is the principal domain of the Archbishops of Cambray. The place was filled with the Archbishop's corn, and the stores which the country people had deposited there for shelter. The Duke of Marlborough immediately ordered them to be taken care of by a detachment, which he sent thither for that purpose. But, upon foreseeing that the scarcity of provisions, for the subsistence of his army, would not permit him to hold out in refusing to let his soldiers forage in that little village, he gave the Archbishop notice of it. Accordingly the corn was put into waggons and conveyed, within sight of the camp of the allies, by an escort of their troops as far as the arsenal of Cambray, which was a kind of general quarters to the army of France, from its neighbouring post on that side of the town. This very singular circumstance shews to what a height the regard for him was carried.



This honour, which was paid to his virtue, was interrupted by a very great affliction. The Duke of Burgundy, (who not a year before was become Dauphin, and immediate heir to the throne, by the death of the Dauphin his father,) died himself. In the height of his grief, the Archbishop was heard to intermingle these words with his sighs, "All my bonds are broken." These were lawful bonds indeed; but it is God's will that they should be broken in the souls which he will have devoted entirely to himself.

After the death of this Prince, his cabinet was found full of the Archbishop's letters to him, and the prince's answers, whereof the originals are still subsisting in his own hand writing, which supply us with valuable testimonials concerning the object of their correspondence and confidence. In the following, we discern in the pupil a deep sense of religion, joined with candour, goodness, and a fixed resolution to learn the most difficult truths.

"I will endeavour to make use of the advice you give me. Pray to God, that he will give me his grace so to do. Desire of God more and more that he will grant me the love of him above all things, above myself, friends, enemies, for him, and in him. I listen to a great many speeches that are made, and will still be made. I condemn myself, where I find I am to blame and I despise the rest; sincerely pardoning all who wish me ill, or do ill to me, and praying for them. These are my sentiments, my dear Archbishop, and notwithstanding all my faults, an absolute determination to give myself up to God. Pray to him without ceasing, that he will be pleased to finish in me what he has already begun, and destroy in me whatever proceeds from original sin and myself. You know that my friendship for you is always the same."

Ever since the misfortunes of the campaign of 1708, he was become a new man. He was continually employed in forming of plans, which might one day be of service, in providing remedies for whatever stood in need of amend-

ment in the state, and give him before-hand a thorough knowledge of the evils, and their true remedies.

The elevation of his genius, and the integrity of his heart, began to make a strong impression upon the King's mind, and to gain him a very large share in his confidence. He every day acquired a greater weight in the council. Upon an occasion, where their sentiments were divided, some being guided by the express terms of a treaty, and others urging the advantages which would arise by not strictly adhering to it, he gave his opinion in these few words, *there is a treaty*. The Duke of Burgundy spoke but these words; the rest was all included, and the King followed his advice.

Some days after his death, the King ordered the box to be brought him, which contained the Prince's most private papers. Upon this Madam Maintenon wrote the following letter to the Duke of Beauvilliers. "I would have sent you whatever was found there of yours and the Archbishop of Cambray's, but the King would needs burn all himself. I own to you, I was greatly concerned at it, for nothing can ever be wrote so beautiful and so good; and if the Prince we lament has had some faults, it has not been for want of free advice, or from having been too much flattered. We may say, that those who walk uprightly are never confounded." The letter was dated from St. Cyr, March 15, 1712. It subsists in the original; written by Madam Maintenon's own hand.

This testimony of Madam Maintenon is very express, who wrote this fifteen years after she had warmly declared herself against the Archbishop of Cambray, and after having seen so long time pass, without any motion on his side to regain the old confidence, which she had formerly placed in him to the highest degree.

The death of such a prince gave the finishing stroke, to disengage the Archbishop of Cambray from all creatures,

and made him pass into a divine life, in which he aspired after nothing but immortality. He lived three years after his august pupil, and saw the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse his two most worthy and intimate friends die before him.

His submission, meekness, silence, and the inviolable attachment he had testified, during the whole time of his banishment, both to the King and to the church, had by degrees made so deep an impression on the King's mind, that he was quite recovered from his prejudices against him. He caused him to be consulted on divers occasions, and at last took a resolution of recalling him to court.

A few months before the conclusion of the peace at Utrecht, the Bishoprick of Ypres was vacant. This preferment he gave to the Abbe de Laval, who resided with the Archbishop of Cambray in his palace as his friend, and whom he had drawn nearer to himself, by making him Vicar-General of his diocese. Thus by little and little the disgrace wore off.

While the good Archbishop had no thought but of living in the peaceable exercise of his episcopal functions, the disorders about Grace, raised by the Jansenists, came to trouble his repose, and drew upon him the bitterest reproaches and the cruellest slanders. They misrepresented him as a politic and ambitious man, whose only aim was to be recalled to court. Others, unacquainted with his character, imagined that he rejoiced at the disgrace of the Cardinal de Noailles, who had at last joined with the Bishop of Meaux against him.\*

In the beginning of the year 1715 he was seized with an

He wrote hereupon to a friend in the following terms:

"—I should think myself a demon if I had any relish of so detestable a joy, and if I were not sincerely grieved at what is so prejudicial to the church. I am truly sorry for the Cardinal. I represent to myself all his pangs. I feel them for him. I never think of past times but to call to mind the favours with which he honoured me for so many years. All that happened afterwards I desire not to think of. I look at nothing but the hand of God, who thought fit to humble me through mer-

inflammation of his lungs, which put him into a continued fever. It lasted six days and an half, accompanied with sharp pains. During this time he gave all the tokens of a truly christian patience, meekness and constancy, shewing to the last breath the serenity of a soul which resigns itself totally into the arms of infinite love. In his last moments, and in the midst of his sharpest pains, the only words he uttered were, *Not my will but thine be done!* The evening he died, he wrote the following letter to Father le Tellier, his Majesty's Confessor.

"I have just received the extreme unction. It is in this state, my reverend father, wherein I prepare myself to appear in the presence of God, that I beg of you instantly to lay my real sentiments before the King. I ever was disposed to submit to the church, and have always held in abhorrence the novelties which have been imputed to me. I received the condemnation of my book with the most absolute simplicity. There never was a single moment in my life, wherein I did not bear the warmest acknowledgments of gratitude towards the King, the sincerest zeal, the most profound respect, and most inviolable attachment to his person.

"I take the liberty of asking two favours of his Majesty, which do not regard either myself, or any of mine. The one is, that his Majesty would have the goodness to appoint me a successor, that is pious, good, and zealous against Jansenism, which has gained ground in these quarters. The other is, that he will be pleased to accomplish with my successor, what could not be done with me, for Messrs. de St. Sulpice. I am indebted to his Majesty for the succour I received from them; nothing can be seen more apostolical

cy.—I hope the Cardinal will overcome himself to restore peace to the church, and to silence all the enemies of religion. The most violent and untractable spirits would be likely to be brought to temper by his example. I pray for him every day with the same zeal I had twenty years ago." This letter was written in 1714, a little more than a year before his death.

and more venerable. If his majesty will be pleased to signify to my successor, that he would do well to conclude with these gentlemen what is already so far advanced, the affair will soon be finished. I heartily wish his Majesty a long life, which the church, no less than the state, has infinite need of."

The King, who had designed to employ the Archbishop of Cambray in the affair we have mentioned, seemed very much afflicted with his loss. When the news of it was brought to him, he answered very sorrowfully, *He is wanting to us at a time when we have need of him.* His death was lamented at Cambray, like that of a parent. Such of his contemporaries, as are now left in the country, cannot see any person who recalls him to their mind without tears. Several of those who had confided wholly in him during his lifetime, took pains, after his death, to communicate the letters they had received from him upon different occasions, and which they had preserved as a treasure of great value. They were formed into one collection, which makes up several volumes, and has been printed under the title of *Spiritual Compositions.*

He departed this life in the beginning of the year 1715, poor as he had lived, being found after his death to be without money and without debts; having no issue to provide for, as he never married. Sometime after, a collection of letters written by him to his friends was printed. In them we find the noblest sentiments founded on the sublimest principles, suited to the capacities of the most simple; a knowledge of the heart of man which unveils it in all its windings and secret recesses; the subtlety of self-love and the delicacy of divine love unfolded and distinguished; a piety full of meekness and condescension to the imperfections of others; and at the same time a mortification of the whole man, which left no resource to the irregular love either of the creature or of SELF.

THE END.

THE  
LIFE OF  
**MICHAEL DE MOLINOS,**  
AND  
PROGRESS OF QUIETISM.\*

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**MICHAEL DE MOLINOS** was descended of a respectable family in Spain. Though he entered into priest's orders, he devoted himself to the service of the church without any desire of worldly advantage from it. His course of life was blameless, but little using those austerities, or ceremonies, which are so much magnified in the church of Rome. The esteem which they have in Spain for St. Teresa had drawn his mind into spiritual divinity, in which he made such advances as to acquire a high reputation, and to gain vast numbers of proselytes.

He published his *Spiritual Guide* in 1675, with the approbation of five celebrated doctors. Four of them were of the Inquisition, and one Esparsa, a Jesuit. It was much read and highly esteemed both in Spain and Italy. The Bishop of Palermo in Sicily, one of Molinos's disciples, in his pastoral letter in 1687, earnestly recommends this little book, saying "It had met with such a favourable reception over all Europe, that in less than six years it had passed through above twenty editions in different languages." Persons of the first quality sought his acquaintance. Letters in abundance were written to him from many parts. At Rome and Naples many of the priesthood openly declared for him. The most eminent were three to whom the

\* It was under the name of Quietists, that Madam Gulon, Father la Combe, and the Archbishop of Cambray suffered persecution.

Pope afterwards gave the Cardinal's hat. One of these was Petrucci, who was looked on as the Timothy of Molinos; but above all Cardinal d'Etrees, Ambassador to the Pope from the King of France. He was one of Molinos's most zealous partizans, approved his principles, contributed to promote them, and entered into a singular friendship with him.

Next year one of Molinos's friends, Cardinal Odescalchi, being made Pope, gave him signal marks of his regard, lodging him in the Vatican, his palace. The Jesuits and Dominicans were alarmed. They saw their trade decay. They branded Molinos with the infamous name of heretic; and to his heresy, as they termed it, gave the name of Quietism. They got the Inquisition to take cognizance of his book and of Petrucci's letters. And as the Jesuit Esparsa had given an authentic approbation to the before-mentioned book, it is said, they privately shut him up within four walls. Whatever way they dispatched him, he was seen no more; so dangerous it is to do any good or honest thing which incurs the wrath of the Jesuits!

Molinos and Petrucci being then arraigned before the tribunal of the Inquisition, defended themselves so well, and refuted their antagonists so fully, that the pieces which the latter had wrote against them were condemned, as scandalous and defamatory libels. This victory augmented the credit and number of the Quietists, and never were their books more eagerly sought after.

Molinos was now at the zenith of this world's favour, lodging in the Pope's palace, treated with high regard, and consulted as an oracle. Honours unsought by him, and enjoyed only for a few years! Such is the vicissitude of worldly favours, his lodging in a palace was afterwards exchanged for that of a dreary prison, though without any demerit of his. He calmly submitted, and with equanimity bore the two opposite states.

As to Petrucci, the Pope gave him a public mark of his esteem, in making him Bishop of Jessi. He had no reason to repent his choice. Petrucci's life and manners were in every respect so exemplary, that his enemies could find no occasion against him, except that he (and the Quietists in general) omitted those exteriors of religion, which in the Romish Church make a person pass for a saint.

The Jesuits and their partizans were excessively chagrined at their late defeat, and the success of the Quietists. "They lamented, they said, the blindness of his holiness, and the sacred college, which did not penetrate the pernicious designs of that sect, nor foresee their consequences; that Molinos was a Spaniard, and that the Spaniards were capable of doing wonders, when their enterprizes were left to ripen; that the errors of the Illuminati in Spain had, before this, brought religion to the brink of ruin; and that the union, silence and secrecy of the Quietists were infallible signs of their nourishing a monster in their bosoms." Some of them even added, that the Quietists were hidden enemies of Christianity; that they concealed their private designs under the specious pretext of a sublime devotion, the better to insinuate themselves into the minds of the people, in order to subvert the belief of the mysteries of religion.

On the other hand it was observed, concerning the exemplary life of Molinos, with his disinterestedness, which induced him neither to pursue, nor even to accept of any worldly dignity, or ecclesiastical benefice, though he was for a long time in very high favour both with the Pope and Cardinals, with the unspotted conduct of his disciples, to which all Italy bore witness, that there could be no stronger proofs of his and their piety and sincerity.

The Quietists continuing sheltered from the rage of their enemies, under the protection of the Pope, the Jesuits determined to leave no stone unturned to suppress them. For this purpose they sent privately to Spain to examine the re-



gisters of his native place, in order to find out whether he might not be descended from the ancient stock of the Jews or Moors: in that case they would have raised a clamour of his having sucked in their impieties with his milk. They also resolved to address the King of France: which they did; and in this they succeeded.

When in that kingdom the destruction of the Huguenots\* was resolved upon, the revocation of the edict of Nantz on the point of being published, and the dragoons just ready to execute the commission given them violently to break up the assemblies of the Huguenots, to disperse or destroy them, the Father la Chaise represented to the King, "that it would be his glory, as the eldest son of the church, to purge Italy from heretics, as he was doing in France; that one Molinos had infected it with pernicious errors, which were beginning to spread farther, and had even entered into his kingdom; that the penitents of the Jesuits decreased every day, while the number of the Quietists was continually increasing excessively; that the Pope, who protected them, shewed in all his conduct, that he was in the interests of the house of Austria; that by raising a persecution against Molinos three very useful points would be obtained; 1st. ruining heresy; 2d. weakening the party of Spain; 3d. making work for the pope, to prevent his giving any disturbance to France."

These reasons had the desired effect. The King sent an order to Cardinal d'Etrees, his ambassador at Rome, to pursue the Quietists with the utmost rigour. Little did he think that the said ambassador was one of them himself.

\* Huguenots was an appellation given by way of contempt to the Protestants in France, 1560. Du Verdier derives it from Huss and guenon an ape, viz. Huss's ape. For John Huss, born at Huss, a little village in Bohemia in 1407, had openly opposed and preached against the errors of popery. The edict of Nantz had been granted to the French Protestants, in favour of their religious liberties, by Henry IV. King of France in 1598. It was arbitrarily revoked by Lewis XIV. in 1685.

What a thunder-stroke to that prelate must this have been at first, he having publicly approved the doctrine of the Quietists, in causing to be translated into Italian the book of a French priest,\* (who goes much farther than Molinos) now to see himself reduced to break the sacred ties of friendship, and to betray his sentiments, or else to disobey his prince! An honest Christian would have said, in such a case, "*that it is better to obey God than man*"; that no consideration ought to oblige us to act against conscience and what we regard as truth." Had that Cardinal wrote this to the King, all he had to fear was to be recalled as he has been since.

But instead of this, he determined to obey the King's order, and to disclaim Molinos; which was done with so much secrecy and expedition, that both Molinos and Petrucci were cited to appear before the Inquisition very suddenly and at unawares. Petrucci was soon dismissed, but Molinos was detained.

Cardinal d'Etrees, in quality of ambassador, had presented to the Pope a letter from the King of France, wherein he set forth, "*that it was a strange thing, that while he himself, in quality of eldest son of the church, was employing all his power in the extirpation of heresies, his holiness entertained in the Vatican an impious seducer of souls, and protected a public despiser of the sacred ceremonies.*" To which the Cardinal added, that he was ready to prove Molinos to be an heretic. To this the Pope only replied, that he might address himself to the Inquisitors.

The Cardinal then presented himself before their tribunal, with extracts from the books of Molinos, and from di-

\* This book was written by Malaval, in the form of a dialogue, and several times printed in France with the approbation of the Doctors of Sorbonne, (the college at Paris.) As the doctrine it contains is conformable to that of Saint Teresa, it was much cried up; and the Italian translation of it was dedicated to the barefooted Carmelites.

was papers of his which had been seized. He would not allow Molinos to give the sense and meaning of his own writings, "because, said he, his obscure terms inclose mysteries, which he has discovered to me." The Inquisitors astonished, and appearing at that time loth to proceed against Molinos, asked the Cardinal, "how he could for so long a time be the particular friend of a man whom he now represented to be so wicked." To this the Cardinal, without any shame, readily replied, "All that he had done was in disguise, in order to discover the more easily the pernicious designs of the Quietists; that from the very first he had seen into the impious consequences of their doctrine; but that he had prudently dissembled to see how far they would carry their impiety; that he had often approved *with the mouth* what he detested *in his heart*; but that the necessity of penetrating to the bottom of those abominable mysteries had obliged him to have recourse to such dissimulation; that in all this, he had done nothing but what was conformable to the rules of the holy Inquisition, which allows of those pious frauds, when one can by no other way come at clear and convincing proofs against an heretic; that if he had delayed so long to accuse Molinos, it was because he waited till he had collected so great a number of proofs and evidences, that the accused might not now escape as he had done before."

Whether the Cardinal could have disguised such a design, for so many years, with the warm professions of esteem, or during that time had been sincere, he certainly at last acted a base and treacherous part: but what will not men do who are governed by sordid ambition?

Molinos was hereupon imprisoned in 1685; and the affair was quiet for some time. During several months he was pretty well treated in prison, as the Pope could not so soon forget their mutual affection. The Pope allowed, "that Molinos might have fallen into some errors, yet he said, he believed him to be a good man."

Thus he remained for near two years, people judging differently about him. His friends hoped that he would come out of this trial more glorious than ever; while such as knew the credit of his adversaries, expected him to be crushed under it; when all on a sudden a storm broke out against the Quietists, which surprised the world.

The Count and Countess Vespianiani, with other persons to the number of seventy, and amongst them some eminent for learning and piety, were all put into prison. They were accused of omitting the exterior practices of religion, and giving themselves entirely to solitude and inward prayer.—The answers which the Countess Vespianiani gave on this occasion astonished her judges. She said, “She had never discovered her manner of devotion to any but her Confessor; that it was impossible for them to have learned it but from him; consequently he was a wicked man who had betrayed her, and revealed her confession: and who but idiots would go to confess, when priests let it be seen that they make use of confessions only to discover secrets, and so to make themselves masters of the fortunes of such as are weak enough to entrust them therewith: but that she was resolved in future to confess to God only.”

The noble firmness and courage of the Countess, which the Lords Inquisitors had not expected, quite confounded them. Not daring to act with rigour against a person of her quality, and not willing to give room to any more such bold answers, so capable of bringing down the credit and authority of the Confessors, by keeping this lady any longer in prison, they set her and her husband at liberty, on their promise of returning to appear before them, as often as they should be required.

It is impossible to describe the consternation the people were in, both at Rome and almost over all Italy, when they saw in less than a month near two hundred persons put into the Inquisition. Every one was afraid for himself; and

they thought there was no safety but in saying "Amen" to all the sentiments of the Jesuits, and siding with them on every occasion ; since they could render the most pious and venerable persons heretics when they pleased ; and turn into abominable errors even the very doctrines which themselves had taught, or cried up with loud encomiums.

Indeed who could think himself safe, when the Pope on this account seemed to be in danger : for now they made him pass for one of the favourers of the new heresy : in consequence hereof the Inquisition sent deputies to examine him hereupon, not in quality of sovereign Pontiff, Christ's Vicar, successor of Saint Peter ; but in quality of a private individual. We have not been able to discover what passed in this extraordinary conference. But they held strange discourses about it at Rome, reporting the answers which learned men of that city made to solve the objections against the Pope's infallibility, which were, " That the Pope cannot err, nor favour heresy without being erroneous or an heretic. In this case, say they, he falls from his dignity, in such sort that if he afterward make a decree in favour of heresy, it is no more the Pope, but an heretic, that does it. The Pope always continues infallible ; and it is only the individual who errs."

These answers amount to nothing ; for if Pope Innocent XI. could fall into Quietism, and hold nevertheless all the exteriors of the Pontificate, who will assure me that when the same Innocent XI. condemned Molinos, he did it in quality of Pope or a simple individual ? be it which it will, was he not more an heretic than the Quietists, being guilty both of hypocrisy in favouring, and of Jesuitism in condemning him ?

Two days after their conference with the infirm decreped Pope, the Inquisitors caused a circular letter, written by Cardinal Cibo their prime minister, addressed to the prelates of Italy, to be sent to apprise them, that in divers parts of

their diocesan assemblies were held ; where, under pretence of teaching " the interior way and prayer of quietude," they taught execrable errors. Wherefore it enjoined them to forbid and to disperse those assemblies, and to pursue to justice such as should be found adopting those criminal novelties. They also nominated Visitors of convents, to examine such as were suspected. On their being asked why they rejected the common prayers and the received customs, they returned so many sound and weighty answers, and concluded with referring to the books of Molinos and Petrucci, already printed several times over with the approbation of the holy office, that little or no reply could be made to them. The examiners found themselves quite disconcerted.

These Visitors having made their report to the Inquisition, it was ordered that, without returning any replies, or giving any reasons for the conduct of the holy office, they should take away from those persons the books of the two chiefs of the Quietists, and all others of the same sort, and enjoin them to resume their hours, *certain prayers*, &c. though they gained nothing from them, and to say over their beads, though they had no relish for them.

The circular letter had no great effect, most of the Bishops of Italy either not minding the contents, or being disposed in favour of Molinos. But what most destroyed its credit was this, that, whereas the orders and letters of the Inquisition are always kept very secret, this happened to be divulged. Copies of it fell into the hands of the people ; all the city was full of it. Scarce any thing else was talked of, as it had been translated out of Latin into Italian. This accident vexed the Inquisitors exceedingly, for they cannot bear that the world should have the opportunity of examining their procedure. Cardinal Cibo was blamed by them for this indiscretion ; and he threw the blame back again upon the Inquisitors, or on their Secretary.

This letter was followed with nineteen articles, or erroneous propositions imputed to the Quietists, to every one of which a short refutation of the pretended errors was subjoined. The sentiments of Molinos and his disciples were portrayed therein in the blackest colours, with much malignity. But they never mentioned from whence they drew those sentiments which they charge them with; for fear lest such as had made those extracts might be convicted of infidelity and malice.

Among the two hundred prisoners afore-mentioned, there were some very considerable: divers domestics of Cardinal Petrucci; his nephew and his secretary were also of the number. Petrucci himself, coming to Rome soon after, kept himself incognito fearing lest the Inquisition should catch him in its trap. The Cardinals Caraffa and Ciceri were under the like apprehensions. The Pope's nephew Don Livio was not one of the least suspected, being the particular friend of the aforesaid Count Vespignani. He had also lived in a very retired manner, which at that time was sufficient to make any one a Quietist at Rome. Beginning to be in dread for his safety at Rome, he retired to a country house he had near Civita Vecchia. The Pope wrote to him several times to return; yet he was afraid of doing it.

The prisons of the Inquisition filled fast every day; the fright all over the city of Rome was so general and so great, that only they whose public debauch and riot, or whose ignorance and stupidity screened them, thought themselves out of danger. It was said that the Inquisitors, in their examination of the prisoners, found some brave resolute people who answered nobly, and shewed more knowledge than their examiners.

The Pope still shewed his regard to Cardinal Petrucci, and gave him leave to go and see Molinos in prison, with whom he had a long conversation. The Pope's mildness had given some hopes to the friends of Molinos; but their

fears redoubled, when they thought on the number and credit of his adversaries. Very formidable enemies, especially in Italy, are all the different orders of monks joined together; of whom they reckon five hundred thousand; amongst them forty thousand Jesuits; and in the single city of Naples, twenty-five thousand Ecclesiastics, both *regular* and *secular*. This reflection made them look upon the condemnation of Molinos as inevitable. They foresaw that the Inquisitors, who are such other politicians as Caiaphas, would conclude with him, that it was *better that one man perish*, though innocent, than that the whole nation of monks should be starved, and *superstition*, to which they owe their subsistence, authority, and riches, destroyed.

The condemnation of Molinos was then resolved upon, and the noise of it spread in the city. Of a million of persons, who were thought to be engaged in the sentiments of the Quietists, there was not one found who dared to open his mouth in favour of their chief.

So completely had the Inquisition, like some hurricane or earthquake, struck an universal panic, that innocence turned pale; fortitude trembled, and was dumb; while cowardice and baseness joined the general outcry, and easily carried all before them. Hence the very same Molinos, who had lived twenty years in Rome, in the reputation of a saint, now passed for one of the wickedest men of the age, being accused of schism, sedition, and of other high crimes and misdemeanors, of which it was easy for the Inquisitors to procure proofs; whether true or false, they could stretch and bend them sufficiently to make them serve their turn.

A general prejudice, like a torrent, had overspread Rome in such a manner, that to say of any person before the spies of the holy office, that he entertained a doubt, either about the errors or the bad life of Molinos, would be sufficient to get such a person clapped into the Inquisition. The Inquisitors gave out that they had not condemned Molinos,



till they had heard the depositions of fourteen witnesses, eight of whom presented themselves; and the truth was drawn from the other six (*by tortures*;) but these fourteen witnesses, it is more than probable, were not worth one good one: such as come to present themselves, to accuse an unhappy man, being generally people hardened in wickedness; and for the others, how common is it for tortures to force men to utter falsehoods!

A hatred of the Pope at this time prevailed among the people of Rome. It broke forth in their discourses, and in the rage which they shewed against an unhappy man whom the Pope had so long protected. In this the Jesuits took pleasure to confirm them. "It is the first time, said they that heresies have dared to lift up their head in Rome. Never before has any arch-heretic presumed to set up his throne in the holy city, and to make a sink of corruption at the fountain-head of religion: and what is stranger still, this abominable heresy has triumphed, even here, during twenty years; his holiness never would lend an ear to the good advices which the spies of the holy office gave him from all sides: such as attacked the Quietists were treated as heretics and calumniators; and after all the proofs which had been collected against Molinos, in consequence of which he had been arrested, the Pope has not failed still to favour him privately; and even after having full proofs of Molinos's hypocrisy and wickedness, with the greatest pains in the world has he been brought at last to assent to his condemnation."

On the day that Molinos was brought into Minerva's temple, his countenance and carriage manifested a steady firmness, such as shewed no consciousness of any guilt, however charged with it by his enemies. A little before this solemnity, the Pope granted a *plenary indulgence*\* to all who should assist at it. This and the proclamation

\* A full and entire remission of the penalties due to all sins.

made of it, joined to the curiosity so natural to people on the like occasions, brought such a concourse of thronging multitudes, that it required one's having a good deal of money or of credit to get a good place there.

At the prison door he was set in an open chariot, with a Dominican friar at his side ; and when he arrived at the Minerva, he was left for some time in a gallery : when he was put in the place designed for him he made a low bow, without shewing the least mark of fear or confusion. He had his hands tied together, holding a lighted waxen taper, which was put into them. In the mean time two monks, clad in long robes, read his process with a loud voice. Some people were suborned to cry out at the reading of certain articles, "*To the fire, to the fire.*" All the people joining re-echoed the cry ; and became so animated to madness, that if the guards in leading him back to prison had not opposed the insolence of the mob, he must have fallen the speedy victim of their fury. When he was near the little cell, in which he was to be shut up for the rest of his life, he entered it with great tranquility, naming it his closet. Then taking leave of the friar who had attended him, he said, "Farewell, at the day of judgment we shall see each other again ; and then it will appear on which side the truth is, whether on yours or on mine."

After this we hear no more of him ; his life and death being kept private among the Inquisitors and their officers.

It was said that the holy office had collected above twenty thousand letters of Molinos, which had been sent and received by him ; and that, on the day he was arrested they seized at the post-office near twenty crowns worth of letters addressed to him. The author of this account tells us that an ecclesiastic of Rome owned to him one day, "that most part of the Quietists were so well instructed, and overpowered their adversaries with so many reasons, passages and authorities, that all the school-divines in the

world could not have been able to confound them : wherefore the church was obliged to interpose, and to stop their mouths by its authority, solemnly declaring them heretics, that nobody might dare to listen to them." A ready way of putting people to silence, when not knowing how to answer them !

The same author hereupon makes the following observation :

Thus the Jesuits by their art, industry, and indefatigable constancy in persecuting innocence and truth, have effected the suppression of the doctrine of divine grace, of self-renunciation, and of the contempt of human traditions, at a time when those evangelical tenets began to have so great a number of adherents in the heart of the Romish church, Bishops, Archbishops, Counts, Dukes, Cardinals, the Pope himself, and his nephew. The Jesuits have again set up, established, and brought to flourish, the spirit of superstition and tyranny, with the school-divinity, and the morality or rather impiety of the casuists. So goes the world in slandering and persecuting good people, because their candour and simplicity gives an easy handle to their enemies ; their virtue and good conscience hinder them from using, for their lawful defence, those unlawful means, which their enemies put in practice to ruin them, while they load with honours and praises those who trample probity and good faith under their feet, in order to raise themselves on the ruins of the virtuous and the faithful.

THE END.

THE

## LIFE OF ST. TERESA.

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I HAVE followed the example of calling her thus, to distinguish her from the many others who have borne the name of Teresa.

The history of her life is now become very scarce in England. I have however met with two of them, one in English, being an abridgment of one by Francis de Ribera; the other, in a collection of lives in High Dutch, said to be written by herself, by order of her Director, from both which I intend to extract such parts as may be sufficient to give the reader an idea of her life and virtues. Her memory is highly esteemed through all the nations in which the church of Rome prevails.

The short introduction to her life reads thus: "She was born at Avila, in Spain, the 28th of March, 1615. Her parents were descended of a noble stock, both of them virtuous and fearing God. She became a spiritual mother of many children. By order of her Director, she wrote the following account of her own life."

MY father was fond of reading good books, and careful to accustom his children thereto. This, with my mother's care to train us up diligently in prayer, excited good desires in my early years. I had nine brothers and three sisters. The brother who was nearest my age, and for whom I had the greatest fondness, used to read with me the lives of holy men and women. When I considered the pain and martyrdom which many of them suffered for the love of God, I thought it a cheap purchase of heaven, and became full of desire to offer myself up in like manner, not indeed out of love to God, so much as from an imagination that it was the readiest way to attain that blessedness which I read was reserved for such.

On this subject I often conversed with my little brother. We deliberated together on the ways and means of arriving at it. At length we concluded to travel and beg our way into Ethiopia, in hopes of being there both beheaded. And indeed I thought the Lord animated me to be valiant in this act of devotion, to leave all for him, and to put this

design in execution. The only obstacle to it seemed to be that of leaving our parents.\*

We were much surprised at reading that the joys of heaven and pains of hell were to be eternal, and found a strong impulse in our minds often to repeat, in eternity ! in eternity ! in eternity ! Through the frequent repetition of these words it pleased the Almighty to confirm us, in our tender age, in a desire of walking strictly in the way of truth. We resolved to seek some solitary place, and began in a garden near our house to build a hermit's hut. I gave alms as far as I was able, and sought lonely retreats for the exercise of prayer. It gives me concern even now to think why I should ever quit these good purposes and desires.

Notwithstanding my mother was a very virtuous woman, yet she was fond of romances, and permitted her children to read them ; but so much against my father's inclination, that for fear of him we were obliged to have recourse to a clandestine way of doing it. I began to be accustomed to it, and thought I did no harm in spending many hours therein, both by day and night : and as one error in practice leads into another, I now began to fall into pride in dress, to desire to appear agreeable in the eyes of others. I took particular care to have a fine hand and a fine head of hair, used perfumes and such other vanities as much as was in my power. The cares of this extraordinary nicety in my person and dress remained with me many years.

I had a vast number of relations ; for scarce any others came to my father's house. The young ones of us were almost always together, being fond of each other's company. These I used to entertain with every thing I knew and

\* According to the account of Francis de Ribera, they had got over the bridge, when they were met and brought back by their uncle, very much to their sorrow. They found their parents under great concern, the little boy laying the whole blame on his sister.

thought pleasing to them. As eager was I also in listening to their childish prattle, which was none of the best. I had an aunt full of levity in her behaviour. With her I became very familiar, as she was ready enough to promote the disposition which I then was in. It was however a friendship very displeasing both to my father and sisters, who often used to reprove me on her account: but as they could not conveniently prevent our being often together, their endeavours were fruitless, as I was very subtil in my evil ways. This intercourse wrought such an unhappy change in me, that I had scarce any remains left of my former virtuous disposition: and though I was never inclined to any gross sins, having a natural aversion to every thing dishonourable, and only pleasing myself in passing away the time in airy conversation, frequent opportunities for which were not wanting, and I was far from declining, or endeavouring to avoid them: hence was my danger greater than I was aware of, from which it was evident I was preserved by the hand of God, who, against my will, prevented my utter ruin. What I have recited did not pass so secretly as escape the observations of my father: for in about three months after he sent me into a convent for my education.

My residence here for the first week was extremely disagreeable. A fear haunted me lest my bad ways were known: and yet, to confess the truth, they had already become burthensome to myself. But after that time I became better satisfied with my new station, than even with being in my father's house. And although a spiritual life seemed then to be but little suited to my taste, yet I found a pleasure in beholding the piety of the ladies of the convent, from whence the good inclinations of my younger years began to revive. Herein I remarked the great mercy of God afforded to such as he brings into the company of virtuous people. Thy name, oh Lord, I praised, and still praise for it. One of the ladies was my bedfellow, in

whose religious and edifying conversation I began to enjoy great satisfaction. She told me how she came to enter upon that kind of life, that an extraordinary impression had fastened on her mind, from reading that text, "Many are called, but few are chosen." She told me likewise of the rewards prepared for those who renounce all things for the sake of God.

Such good company began to root out of my heart the evil which had been implanted in it, and was gathering strength, through the means of my former associates, and to revive my first warm desires after things eternal. From hence my aversion to a recluse life began to abate. When I saw any amongst them shedding tears in prayer, or pos-  
sessed of any eminent virtue, it made me reproach myself with my own hardness of heart. I began to pray much with the lip and tongue, and to recommend to all in the house to pray to God, that he would vouchsafe to place me in such a situation as that I might serve him.

After I had been here about a year and a half, I fell dangerously ill, whereby I was obliged to return home. When I was somewhat recovered, I was sent to my sister's house in the country; but was stopped short in the way, as there lived by the road a brother of my father's, a very virtuous man and a widower, who spent much of his time in reading spiritual books. His conversation generally turned on God, and on the vanity of the world. He made me read that kind of books to him: and although I found no great pleasure therein, yet I was obliged to constrain myself, and appear to him as if I was much pleased therewith, as I had resolved always to give as much pleasure as I could to others, however contrary to my own inclinations; so that what was really a virtue in others, was in me through my artful dissimulation, a great fault. How hast thou, most gracious God, been pleased to prepare me for the state which it was thy pleasure I should be in, and even to make

my own opposition subservient thereto! Blessed be thy holy name for ever: Amen.

Though I stayed at my uncle's but a few days, yet the divine word, which I there heard and read, had such a power upon my heart, that I began to feel again that sacred truth which had imprest my infant years, in reference to the vanity of the world, the emptiness of all things in it, and how soon all vanished away; I began to fear that, if I should die I might probably be lost. And though my will was not yet turned to a spiritual life, yet, perceiving the greater safety of that state, I determined to force myself into it. In this strife I continued at least three months, the enemy in the mean time making me believe, that, as I had been so tenderly brought up, it would be impossible for me to endure the restrictions required in it: but against this insinuation of his I alledged the trouble and the pains which Jesus Christ had endured for me, and that certainly it could not be esteemed much that I should endure some on his account, depending on his assistance for support.\*

Whilst I was busied with these thoughts, I persuaded my brother also to betake himself to a monastic life, through my representations to him of the vanity of the world. We both of us resolved on a certain day, viz. the second of November 1535, very early in the morning, to execute our purpose. When I left my father's house, I found myself in such a condition, that I scarce believe on a death bed I could have felt greater pain. All my bones seemed to shake, so violent were the struggles I felt, by reason of my love of God not being strong enough to induce me readily to forego the love I bore to my father and friends. Yet it pleasing

\*It appears that it was contrary to her parents' will that she should enter a monastery: but it was held in the church of Rome, to be commendable in children, after they were grown up, to sacrifice every thing that might binder their dedicating themselves to the church, and it was also enjoined as the duty of parents, to submit to the wish of their children in this respect.



the Almighty to strengthen me in my resolution: and hereupon I entered into the convent which in my mind I had fixed upon.

No sooner had I put on the habit but he let me clearly see how readily he assists those who continue firm in the purpose of sacrificing all to him: for from that moment I experienced so great a joy, for what I had done, as remains with me even to this day. The barrenness of my heart was changed into such a sweet sensibility, as rendered the exercises of the cloister most agreeable to me.

I acknowledge that often, in those hours when I used to adorn the body, I was troubled with a secret remorse: and now, reflecting on myself as freed from it, I felt new joys springing up in my soul, wondering at the same time whence they came. As, often as this recurs to my mind, methinks there is nothing in the world so difficult which for the sake of those joys I would not freely undergo. From this time forward, in many things, I experienced that, when I formed in earnest a pious resolution, it pleased God even in this life to recompense it, in such a manner, as those alone are capable of conceiving, who have had the same experience.

When any thing is done with a stedfast eye to the Lord, he wills that the soul should at first be proved and alarmed: and the greater the fear and terror, the greater the recompense; provided all the obstacles are overcome, and the due fidelity be manifested. The soul afterwards finds so much greater comfort, resulting from the obstacles surmounted. Oh my dearest Lord, my only rest and refuge! Here I hardly know how to proceed. For when I recollect in what manner I have exercised my profession, with what resolution and comfort performed its duties, and how I have been united to thee in my fidelity therein; I am not able to utter it without tears, my heart ready to burst, and all too little when I consider thy divine Majesty.

I passed the first year in a poor state of health, which

gave my father much concern. Receiving but little benefit from the physicians of this place, he caused me to be removed to another, which was celebrated for the cure of all kinds of diseases.

In the beginning of the summer, I was here to go under the physician's care. The intervening time I passed at a sister's house in my way thither. My father had given me a book which treated of the way of being collected in prayer, with which I was much affected. I resolved to follow its directions with earnestness, seeking at certain hours places of solitude. As I continued this practice, it pleased God to favour me with internal quietude, and sometimes an intimate union with him. Though it continued not long, yet it left with me so deep an impression, that notwithstanding I was then little more than twenty years of age, I seemed to myself to have got above the whole world, and could not help pitying those who suffered themselves to be led by its influence, even in things termed innocent. Though I passed most of my time in reading spiritual books, as my mind was not yet adapted to recollection, in this troublesome manner, under such incapacity and barrenness of soul, I passed eighteen years, in all which time I dared not to address myself to God in prayer, without the assistance of a book.

As the time was now come for my going to the place where my cure was to be attempted, I was conveyed thither with great care. There I continued for three months, enduring very exquisite pain, imagining the medicines were too severe for my weak constitution, insomuch, that for two months I was scarcely sensible, and those about me feared lest I should be totally deprived of my senses, through the failure of my strength.

In this condition my father carried me home again, where he brought other physicians to visit me, who all despaired of my recovery, as they thought I had also a consumption

of the lungs. Under all this complicated pain, it pleased the Lord in such a manner to endue me with patience, my disorder being evidently from his hand, that I could not but much wonder at it myself, to which the reading of the life and transactions of Job, in the treatise of St. Gregory de Moralibus, had as I thought contributed.

I began to exercise myself in prayer to God, prepared as it were by this visitation, to submit in all things to his divine pleasure. All my conversation was now with God, and my thoughts were continually on this expression of Job, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" with these words I seemed comforted. One night I fell into a swoon, and continued in a state of insensibility for at least four days and nights after it, all who were about me expecting my death every moment: nay, sometimes they thought I was actually dead. Amidst their earnest prayers for me, blessed be God who heard them, about a day and a half after a grave was made ready for me, he was pleased to bring me to myself again. On this, my sudden revival, I wanted immediately to be confessed; for even now I cannot help thinking doubtfully of my salvation, if I had happened then to die.\* Nor can I help shuddering when I reflect on the danger it pleased God to rescue me from, by raising me up as it were from the dead. This complicated malady left me in such a condition, that God only knows the intolerable pain I underwent.

In this weak state I remained till Easter, when I was very desirous to return to the convent, although I seemed nothing but skin and bone; and continued in that miserable condition for near eight months afterwards. I was deprived of the use of my limbs for very near three years. I praised God as soon as I became able to go with crutches, and passed through the whole in much resignation to his will, and even with cheerfulness, except at the beginning, when my pains were most exquisite. My mind indeed was

so fully resigned to the will of God, that I could have been contented to have remained always in the same condition. I thought that all my desire after health was only that I might, in solitude, expect in prayer that which I had been instructed in, towards which (in my sick chamber) I thought there was no opportunity. I took great care to speak evil of nobody, and to hinder others from doing it, as much as I could; so that it was well known, where I was, people's characters were secured from evil tongues. I ardently longed for solitude. It was pleasing to me to think and to speak of God: and if I met with any persons like-minded, it gave me more pleasure and satisfaction than all the politeness, or to speak more properly, than all the vanity of worldly conversation. I felt great concern if I thought I had, in any thing, at any time, offended God: in-  
so-much, that I remember, that many times I durst not attempt to pray, as I feared in prayer to bring greater pain of mind on myself. Nor did this pain so much arise from fear, as from reflecting on the comforts I had often experienced in prayer, the special favours God had dispensed to me therein, and how ill I had requited his goodness. These instances of the fear of God tended to my improvement, whilst I perceived that fear was so accompanied with love, as to cause me but little to regard any pain attending it.

Thou then, oh my God, wast graciously pleased once more to bless me with health, in order that I might serve thee better. But behold the frailty of human nature, when departing from thee. As my health increased, I began to slide away from one degree of vanity to another. At last I ventured upon such opportunities of sinning, and plunged my soul into such dissipation, that I could not think of returning to God, or addressing him in prayer. This was a most pernicious deception of the enemy. Under the notion of humility, I was afraid to exercise my heart in that duty, seeing myself so vile. I thought it would be better to

live as others did (though I seemed to be the worst of the wicked) than to continue in the exercise of that spiritual application and free intercourse with God: for indeed I looked on myself as much more worthy of being a companion of infernal spirits, than to approach him who is pure and holy; and that I only deceived the people by external appearances, which seemed good, and passed for such. I therefore concluded that I had done myself much harm by not continuing shut up in a convent: for liberty, which people of a steady conduct might use with safety, had certainly ruined me, had not the Almighty, by many extraordinary ways and means, delivered me from the infinite danger I was in.

If parents would follow my advice, it should be not to send their children to such a seminary or convent, where their salvation is in greater danger than even in the world. Oh rather let them marry, though ever so meanly, except they are of themselves inclined to good: and even so, God grant that it may help to preserve them when they are there! It is exceedingly to be lamented that so many, desirous of being separated from the world, and set free from the dangers which are in it, enter into a convent with a view of dedicating themselves to the service of God, when in fact they enter into a little world, tenfold worse than the great one, where they know not what to begin upon, nor how to help themselves.\* The way of true holiness is so little ob-

\* The order of the Carmelites was at first tied down under very strict rules, which, being thought too severe, were mitigated by Pope Innocent IV. in 1245. From hence Teresa afterward applied herself to reform the disorders she saw so rampant in their cloisters, by restoring them to the Primitive austerity and strictness, instituting first among the Nuns, and then among the Friars, the order of the barefooted Carmelites. For in the monastery of the mitigated Carmelites, which she was in, it appears that she had remarked such disorders and private vices as shocked her. What abominable deeds of darkness were carried on, in the monasteries in England, was twice discovered and laid open to the public, on a search made, in the reign of King Henry VIII.

served there, that any one desirous to lead a life of strict piety, has more to fear from the companions of the order than from the very devils themselves. Here one needs to use more caution and dissimulation, in speaking of a friendship and communion with God, than upon the subject of irregular friendships, and inclinations which have their rise only from the enemy. I know not why we are so apt to wonder that so much evil is at this day to be found among the Christian churches; since those who ought to be an example to others, and from whom every virtue should be learned, have so marred the work, and lost all the life and spirit which had remained of the first holy fathers. O may it please the Divine Majesty to remedy this great evil as he knows it to be much needed! Amen.

When I first came into the community, I had not the least suspicion that it would have had so hurtful an effect on my mind: but some time after, being in company with a certain person, the Lord caused me to see that such acquaintance was for me very improper. My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ appeared to me with a severe countenance, and by his rebukes made me sensible of his displeasure for entering into fellowship with such. With the eyes of my soul I beheld him more evidently than I could have done with those of my body. The idea of his form and appearance has ever since continued with me so distinct, that though it is more than twenty-six years ago, it is as if I saw him even now present before me. It discomposed and terrified me to such a degree, that I could never bear to see the person I had conversed with. Probably other things too had done me hurt, which were less perceived by me, and through the crafty wiles of the enemy unsuspected.

Among the sisters of the house I had in one of them a true friend, somewhat advanced in years, a zealous servant of God, who sometimes admonished me; but all the good I then reaped from it was to take offence, and to think she

was displeased without a cause. I relate this purposely to shew on one hand the excess of my iniquity, and on the other hand the great extent of God's goodness, at the very time when my ingratitude justly merited his highest indignation.

I well remember what earnest desires I felt, in the beginning of my illness, when utterly incapable of helping myself, to excite others to the ardent pursuit of true piety and goodness. Having at this time a flow of tender affection for my dear father in particular, strong were my desires and prayers on his behalf, that he might be blest with the heart-felt enjoyment of the same good which I seemed to be possessed of through that near access to God in prayer, which then was granted me, and brought with it a most certain evidence that it was the highest good attainable. I endeavoured therefore with all my ability, or that which was given me from above, to prevail on him to devote himself to God entirely. I also lent him such books as were best suited to this great and good end. And indeed to him this care of mine was signally blest. It obtained such effect, and wrought on him so much, in the space of five or six years, that I could not forbear returning praises to God for the great success he was pleased to bestow on my fervent desires, and labour herein. My dear father met with many heavy crosses, and oppositions from divers quarters, which he bore with the greatest meekness and patience, and through them all continued stedfast in his submission to the divine will. He visited me often, and his visits were very reviving and comfortable, his delight being to commemorate the goodness of God, and to speak about heavenly things. But alas! I was now become too conscious to myself of dissipation, and the neglect of my indispensable duties. I could not help confessing the truth to him. For a whole year I omitted the practice of prayer, imagining it to be out of humility, as being sensible of my

unfitness for it. He however having, through a constant fidelity, attained a high degree of perfection, came not so often to see me. His visits were short. He would say that to tarry longer was only loss of time. Many others beside him I had been instrumental to draw into the same state of inward prayer, though I was now in the disuse of it myself.

About this time my dear and honoured father fell ill and died. His end crowned his life. It may be said of him, *he finished his course with joy*. It gave us who were near him occasion to praise God, both on his account, and for the many wholesome instructions and advices he gave us before his death. He very earnestly exhorted us always to serve God, and well to consider that every thing here below is but transitory. He told us with tears how much he repented that he had not served the Lord with greater diligence ; and wished he had been amongst those of the most rigorous order known.

Very painful to my mind was the life I then lived, because I had in prayer a most perfect perception of my faults. On one side my God called me, on the other I followed the world : and though divine things were very acceptable to me, yet I found myself fast bound by things temporal. I sought to obtain a compromise betwixt these two, notwithstanding their contrariety, and the wide difference which there is betwixt a sensual and spiritual life, and betwixt the satisfactions attendant on each of them. From hence I underwent much agony of mind, all its tranquility, and sense of goodness, being frequently interrupted by the intrusion of a thousand impertinent thoughts. Many years passed on thus, insomuch that I cannot help wondering at my continuing so long in a wavering undetermined state. Were I but to relate all the instances which powerfully withheld me, and also the dangers from which I have been delivered, how could I sufficiently admire that grace which preserved



me, which thou, oh my God, didst continually favour me with! even at the very times of my offending thee, thou wast pleased to turn my penitences into a preparation for higher enjoyments of thy blessed self. Thou hast vouchsafed, oh my supreme and only Sovereign, through these methods, at once the most comfortable and the most painful, to induce me effectually to return to thee. It is a miserable case indeed, amidst such a variety of dangers, as great perhaps as ever happened to any, to be destitute of every friendly help. By the means thereof, if I had met with it, I might have been preserved from such frequent relapses.

I therefore advise those, who are determined to accustom themselves to the exercise of spiritual prayer to God, to seek after an acquaintance with such as are habituated to the practice of this duty. Much depends on it, not only to their furtherance in that way, but also to the acquiring many virtues and solid advantages. Where people follow the vanities of the world, nobody regards the omission of it as any fault; so much are their minds darkened, and their judgments perverted thereby; but if once a person begins to betake himself to God, numberless oppositions arise, and render the assistance of experienced persons necessary for their support, till such time as they are grown, and of sufficient strength to withstand the onset, and to avoid or bear the distresses and trials thereof, which otherwise, in a weak state of infancy, might be likely to overwhelm them. In regard to myself, I may say, that had it not pleased God to discover to me this truth, and to furnish me with opportunities of often conversing with spiritual and experienced persons, I should have certainly been lost, through the many relapses which befel me. My friends indeed were many; but then they were chiefly such as led me astray, from which defection there was none to assist me in the much needed recovery; so that to me it really seems a matter of wonder that I ever recovered at all. I am therefore under

very great obligations to extol and adore the mercies of my God, whose hand alone raised me up from death to life, even into his own pure love and service. Blessed be his holy name for ever. Amen.

It is not without good reason that I have diligently traced the strange revolutions of my former days. It indeed makes me sensible that the perusal of such a succession of inconsistencies can afford little pleasure to any : yet I desire such as peruse it, may reap this advantage from it, to have a dread of such stubborn ingratitude to him that bestows on us all that is good. I wish it were in my power properly to describe by what means, so very often during that time, I proved unfaithful : but I may acknowledge in short, that it was owing to a defect on my part, in not duly applying myself to derive strength to my mind from prayer, to enable me to abide steadfast in my duty to God. Near twenty years I floated on the moving waves of this turbid sea, one while falling, then rising again, yet not rising as I ought to have done, seeing in so short a time I ever fell again. In that space indeed, sometimes for several months, and once a whole year, I lived in such constant vigilance and devotion to God, *as to have always a conscience void of offence both toward him and man.* Such good days were however few, but the evil days many. When I was indisposed in body, my soul was in a better condition, enjoying more of communion with God, as he graciously heard my cry in the day of my distress, and condescended to be my support and comforter therein. I then also took special care only to associate with such as were like-minded.

In this manner have I, for the most part, for eight and twenty years continued fighting, sometimes against God, and sometimes against the world. This my experience I publish for caution to others, as from it I can say that whosoever has begun the practice of prayer to God, though in the mean time he may too often deviate, yet ought he to

persevere therein ; for it is the only means of his recovery. Let him not yield to the insinuations of his enemy, as unhappily I did, to discontinue it through a pretended humility, but rather steadfastly believe that the promises of God shall not fail, namely, if we have compunction of heart, resolving never to offend him more, that he will restore us to his former friendship.

Are there any who have not done this? Such I beseech in the love of God, no longer to deprive themselves of so great a good: for herein is nothing to fear, but much to hope for. Mental prayer is nothing else than with a heart inflamed with the love of God, to desire and seek to walk with him in private, with him who we know loves us, and seeks to draw us to; and fit us for, happiness with himself. Though thou mayest not as yet love him, yet let that by no means discourage thee. Consider that a true and lasting friendship implies a mutual correspondence of both parties. On God's part, as is well known, is nothing wanting. On our part, though ingratitude and inconstancy prevail, yet as much depends on enjoying his friendship, and seeing he loves thee so much, willingly bear the pain which thou feel'st in thy approaches to that God who is so far unlike thyself. Oh boundless goodness of my God! Methinks at this time I feel such a correspondence, and such an union betwixt us, as never can be expressed. Oh thou joy of Angels! When my soul, with its affections, is fixed on thee, how earnestly I long to be dissolved into pure love! How great a truth is it that thou willingly bearest with those who have long been averse to draw nigh to thee! Oh how true a friend thou shewest thyself to be, my Lord and my God! How kindly thou dealest with us, how patiently thou waitest for us, requiring us to come to thee in thy manner, yet in the mean time condescending to bear with us in our manner; and for a slender repentance of ours, forgetting all our offences! Of this I have had a most

convincing experience, and cannot but wonder that the whole world is not attracted to thee, through the power of such extraordinary love as thou continually makest manifest. It is only by drawing near thee that the ill-disposed can become upright.

One day as I went into my chamber to pray, I saw Christ my Saviour much wounded and deeply afflicted. It affected me exceedingly to think how much he had suffered for us. It struck me with a sense of my ingratitude towards such great and manifest love. I cast myself at his feet, and with a flood of tears most humbly besought him, that he would in future so strengthen me as never more to offend him.

About that time I met with the book of St. Augustine's Confessions. When I began to read it, it seemed to me as if I were particularly described therein. When I had read his conversion, and after what manner he heard a voice in the garden, I could not help thinking I was spoken to after the same manner. I wept much at the sight of my condition. How must the soul suffer, when it sees it has lost its liberty, which, as a conqueror, it ought to have maintained! But when the Lord brought me out of the state of death I had been in, then my soul seemed to be overshadowed and filled with his majesty and glory. I therefore felt a greater desire to be totally occupied with him alone, and to avoid all avocations from him, that nothing might interrupt me therein. My soul was filled with consolation even throughout this whole year. I was not however so bold as to pray for such overflowing joys, but instead of these, that he would forgive my sins, and give me grace not to offend him any more. I thought it was goodness enough to me that he would tolerate me in his presence, fully sensible that, if he had not drawn me, I should never have come to him. Once indeed, being in great barrenness, I remember I desired some renewed consolation: but as soon as I reflected on what I had done, I was ashamed of my being so deficient in humility.

Sometimes at unawares I had such a sense of the presence of God, as thoroughly dispelled every doubt, and satisfied every faculty of the soul. In that state the will only seems to live: the understanding is not employed, although not lost. It is as it were amazed at the multitude of divine things therein perceived.

I pray that, to whomsoever this may come, they would publish all I have said concerning the evil of my life, so that the world may take warning by it, and be no longer deceived in thinking any good to be in me: for this I can say of a truth, so far as I know myself, their doing so would give me a pleasure: but what I have now to relate I must not permit to be so published, of whom it is so spoken, or who hath written it. For this reason I name not myself, but intended so to write, as much as possible, that it may remain unknown. If it please God to permit me to speak of any good, that good is his and not mine; seeing of myself I am ignorant, and altogether evil, and have neither been instructed by the learned, nor by any others. I am obliged to steal opportunities to write, and even that with much trouble, as it hinders me in my business in the convent, where I have very much to go through. If I speak of any good, God permits it for the sake of others. He well knows, my only desire is to praise him, as he has been most graciously pleased "out of a barren waste to make a garden full of pleasant flowers." God grant that it may never become again as heretofore!

Thus far she has continued the thread of her narrative, and from hence passes into a wide field of contemplative observations, which I think likely to be edifying to very few; to most readers rather tedious to, follow her through the mysterious and intricate maze.

The abridgment of Francis de Ribera informs us that when she was about twelve years old, it pleased God to take away her mother, which very sensibly afflicted her.

After which she read the epistles of St. Hierom, and was so affected by them as to resolve on a religious course. Having applied to her father, and being refused his consent, early in the morning, on the day of the commemoration of All-Souls in the year 1535, being now twenty years of age, without saying any thing to any one, except one of her brothers who accompanied her, she went to the monastery of the incarnation, at Avila.

Great was the edification with which she lived in her monastery, and much good she did by her pious example, by the light which shined in her good works, notwithstanding all her endeavours to hide it. Many noted persons have averred that she was able to teach the sciences of mystic divinity, as perfectly as the greatest Doctors used publicly to teach other sciences.

After having with great diligence, and through much opposition, founded the monastery of the barefooted Carmelites, who were to observe the primitive rule of that order, without any mitigation, the General of the Carmelites came to Avila, and gave her without being asked, very large letters patent, to empower her to found more such monasteries. She made so good use of this power, that she founded no less than two and thirty such monasteries (as at Valladolid, Burgos, Malaga, Seville, and other towns and places) as well of men as of women; in which business she at length obtained the favour of the king and grantees of the kingdom, and of Pope Gregory the thirteenth.

Hereupon the author writes, " Who would ever have thought that one sickly maid, placed in a monastery, with so many bonds of religion and obedience, without money, without the favour of the world; yea, with so many contradictions and persecutions, was to be the mother of so many and so good children, a foundress of so many monasteries, and to reform an order which had now been for so

long a time in the condition wherein she found it? what man would have dared to undertake such great things? who would not have lost courage, after he had undertaken them, meeting with so many difficulties, impediments, murmurings, oppositions of all sorts, from persons secular and ecclesiastical, good and bad?"

The love which filled her heart, toward God and her neighbours, made her expose herself to so many labours, take so many fatiguing journies, when afflicted with maladies and pains of body, through colds, rain, snow and excessive heats; in fine, to found so many monasteries, where, by the close and daily exercise of Christian virtues, such a number of souls might be saved. She shewed on every occasion the greatest care, charity and tenderness to the poor, the sick, the afflicted in body or in mind. She even loved those who persecuted and used her ill, who hindered her in her works, or persecuted her both by words and actions. She would not permit any of them to be spoken ill of, no not even in jest, but would have them spoken well of or excused. She said, "Seeing we know most certainly that Christ is with us, we ought not to let slip so good an opportunity of treating with him, but ought, as often as we can, to set apart a good space of time to be with him, not employing our thoughts on any thing else." This she recommended very much, saying, "If when he was in the world outwardly, sick people were cured only by the touch of his garment, what doubt is there but that he will do miracles, being within us, if we have a lively faith, and that he will give us what we ask him, as he is in our house? he does not use to pay ill for his lodging, if he be well received and entertained. This is therefore a very good time for us to negociate with him, since it pleases him much that we should keep him company."

Amidst all her virtues and singular graces she was so humble, that she took pleasure in manifesting her faults,

ever guarding against any estimation of herself being expressed, especially by persons of note and authority. For this purpose she kept in her view her past sins and inconstancies. She avoided as much as she could all the honourable offices of her house, chusing to be a Sister Converse, and to serve as such in the lowest and most painful offices of the house; with great joy also serving her week in the kitchen, and doing every thing well therein. She said, "Our Lord was a great lover of humility, because he much loved truth; and humility is a certain truth, which is to know the little that we are, and that we have no good thing of ourselves; and that there was no fear of hurting either soul or body by it, but on the contrary much real profit every way reaped from it."

From this profound humility, and knowledge of herself, proceeded her patience, and desire of suffering for Jesus Christ; for how great soever her pains were, she always thought them too light in comparison of what her sins deserved. In her body she suffered very grievous maladies, many of which lasted till her death, which she endured with wonderful patience. She always eat very little, and drank no wine. If her superiors and confessors would have permitted her, she would have done extraordinary penances.

Her affection for holy poverty was indeed very rare. Hence she greatly opposed the foundations of monasteries which were to be rented, and willingly undertook such as were to depend upon alms: and when there was the least provision in the house she was most content. She desired that poverty should be seen in all things belonging to her monasteries, remembering that the Lord of the world had not a house, or place where to lay his head. "Oh my God, said she, how little do fair or sumptuous buildings conduce to the real benefit of the soul!"

She used to say that perfection consists in this, that our will be conformed to that of God, to will that which he



wills, whether it be sweet or bitter. "This alone, said she, is the true union with him, but the too great fondness for spiritual enjoyments is rather an union with *self-love* than with the will of God."

Returning from Burgos, on her arrival at her native place, she had an assurance in her own mind, that the Lord was about to condescend to her longing desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ. She continued instant in prayer. Amongst other things she said, "Oh my Lord, my Spouse, the hour I have so much desired is now come. It is now time that we see one another. It is what I long for ; and may thy holy will be done. I must now quit this low mortal state, and enjoy with thee what I have so much desired." She often repeated certain verses of the Psalms, and particularly that half verse, "A humble and contrite heart thou wilt not despise." So she continued in prayer, in great peace and tranquility, till she rendered up her soul to her Creator ; which was about nine o'clock at night, on the 4th of October, the day immediately preceding the 15th, by reason of the change of the calender in the year 1582, Gregory XIII. being Pope, and Philip II. King of Spain.— She was canonized for a saint by Pope Gregory the XV. Her feast is annually celebrated through the whole church of Rome on the 15th of October.

THE  
LIFE OF  
**ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.**

BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA.

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THE writer of his life begins thus. "Heaven made a rich present to the world (on Thursday the 6th of August) in the year 1567, the birth-day of blessed Francis de Sales. His parents were both eminent in virtue and blood." "The chamber he was born in was dedicated to St. Francis de Assize, and therefore he was called Francis. His countenance was so lovely, and his behaviour so modest, that the sight of him raised the idea or meditation of an angel's beauty."

The first impressions given him were the fear of sin, and the love of virtue. When he was of age to leave his father's house, he was sent to the college of Annecy, and thence to Paris. At the age of twenty-three or twenty-four years he commenced Doctor, with the approbation of twenty-eight Doctors, who knew not which to admire in him most, whether his extensive genius, or his exemplary piety.

On his return into Savoy, his father intended to introduce him into the parliament of Chamberry, not knowing that God had chosen him to labour for his glory in a more sacred sphere.—He turned to M. Deage, his governor, and said, "I see Sir, that God calls me to follow him in the way of the cross : I must obey him." From that time his heart became so in love with the holy crucified Jesus, that he desired nothing but the cross. He then discovered his desire to his parents, and in all humility begged their consent ; which having obtained, he instantly took the cassock,

confirmed his mind in the contempt of the world, grew more zealous in the service of God, at once took the lower orders and the first of the holy ones; acquitted himself in such a manner therein, as to be judged fit for higher employments; the provostship of the cathedral church of Geneva was given him, with express commission to root heresy out of the countries of Chablais, Gaillard and Ternier. He spent the days in preaching and catechising these seduced souls, and the nights in imploring their conversion by prayers and penances. In administering spiritual nurture to others, he forgot to allow corporal nourishment to himself. He lost half his sleep by the frequent conferences he had with hereticks. It cannot be expressed how happily the people of this poor land were altered and improved by his care and vigilance; so plentifully heaven blessed his labours! In two or three years he almost extirpated out of it that heresy which for seventy years had been taking deep root in it. Monsieur de Greneir, Bishop of Geneva, upon a certain knowledge which he had both of his virtue and abilities, chose him for his coadjutor, and obtained the approbation of his choice at Rome, by Pope Clement the eighth; and a little after he was consecrated Bishop of Geneva. To acquit himself worthily of this charge, he resolved to take for his pattern St. Charles Boromeus; beginning after his example to reform the clergy, to re-establish the ecclesiastical state in its former fervour and piety, to furnish the benefices with fit persons, and to compose a particular ritual. He laboured so powerfully in reforming the manners of the laity, that the people of Geneva became altogether changed. He likewise preached at Paris, to the great satisfaction of all, and with such effect, that King Henry IV. desired to detain him in France, promising him a better bishoprick than that of Geneva. But he, having no relish for such kind of honours and preferments, would not break his faith, which he had given to his first Spouse. From Paris he returned

home, and employed himself more fervently than ever in his duties.

From the care of the perfection of worldly people, he proceeded to the instruction of religious persons, and founded the Order of the Nuns of the Visitation, whose meekness, piety, and charity, revive, even at this day, the spirit and memory of their founder. He received a command from the Pope to compose the rules of this new order, which he did so prudently as to be esteemed the instrument of the Holy Ghost, designed for the establishment of an order so honourable to the church of God. He took particular care of this order, sowing such good seeds by his pious labours, that from them he saw fruits of sanctity growing up. The love of God possessed him entirely, and that of his neighbour made him keep a list of all the bashful poor in the town, whom he privately relieved. His love of holy poverty was so great, that, in imitation of St. Charles Borromeus, he wore one suit of cloths more than nine years, and chose for his last retreat a gardener's house, to the end he might die the more poorly. His chastity, though often assaulted by the enemy of mankind, was always victorious : and he preserved his innocence in sharp trials, wherein others would have suffered shipwreck. His humility was such that he thought himself happy in opportunities of instructing and serving the meanest persons, and every where sought the lowest place. His innocence was so like that of a dove, that by his discourse it was easily judged what was in his heart ; his mildness was so extraordinary, that one look of his hath gained many souls to God ; his prayer so fervent, and so constant, that amongst his greatest employments, he kept all the powers of his soul united to God. In fine, his perfections were so well known, that several Popes have commended him ; the Kings of France and Spain honoured him, and all good prelates endeavour to imitate him.

Going to Avignon, in the service of the Duke of Savoy, he took his last leave of many of his friends. Being arrived at Lyons, he fell sick, and passed out of this world to a better, at eight o'clock at night, the twenty-eighth of December, 1622, after he had lived fifty-five years, and had the oversight of the church of Geneva twenty-two, in the state of a most innocent and exemplary life.

He left behind him some pieces in French, the chief of which is his *Philothea*, or, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, consisting of five parts, each containing a good number of chapters: at the end he gives some maxims of piety, which are generally esteemed, as they exhibit a deep knowledge of the human heart.

A  
SHORT AND EASY  
**METHOD OF PRAYER:**

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

MADAM J. M. B. DE LA MOTHE GUION,

*BY THOMAS DIGBY BROOKE.*

## THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE following excellent book was the first essay of the truly pious Madam GUION ; it was, quickly after its publication, dispersed through great part of France ; and it proved the happy instrument of many conversions. Those who were athirst for righteousness, eagerly imbibed the simple and efficacious precepts it contains ; and those who had already made advances in the divine life were convinced of the truth of their way, and found ample instructions how to proceed. None who were advocates for genuine piety, could be offended at it ; as the most salutary instructions for the attainment of Christian Perfection are enforced, without being blended with such matters of opinion as cause offence.

Through the treatise, it is certain, that there are two fundamental truths taken for granted, namely, the fall and the redemption : and indeed, whosoever doth not inwardly feel the former, cannot experience the benefit of the latter ; he hath no business with this book, nor even with the Bible ; “ he is whole, and needeth not a Physician.”

Should but a few of my Christian brethren reap advantage from this attempt to bring to light a treasure that has lain so long hidden and unnoticed, it would be, not only an abundant recompence, for any little trouble I may have had in the translation, but also an encouragement to publish some other pieces of this illuminated author.

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## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS little treatise, conceived in great simplicity, was not originally intended for publication : it was written for a few individuals, who were desirous to love God with their whole heart ; some of whom, because of the profit they received in reading the manuscript, wished to obtain copies of it ; and, on this account alone, it was committed to the press.

It still remains in its original simplicity, without any censure on the various divine leadings of others : and we submit the whole to the judgment of those who are skilled and experienced in divine matters ; requesting them, however, not to decide, without first entering into the main design of the author, which is to induce the world to love God, and

to serve him with comfort and success, in a simple and easy manner, adapted to those who are unqualified for learned and deep researches, and are, indeed, incapable of any thing but a hearty desire to be truly devoted to God.

An unprejudiced reader may find, hidden under the most common expressions, a secret unction, which will excite him to seek after that sovereign good, whom all should wish to enjoy.

In speaking of the attainment of perfection, the word *facility* is used; because God is, indeed, found with facility, when we seek him within ourselves. But, in contradiction to this, some, perhaps, may urge that passage in St. John, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me;" (chap. vii. 34.) this apparent difficulty, however, is removed by another passage, where he, who cannot contradict himself, has said to all, "seek and ye shall find." (Matt. vii. 7.) It is true, indeed, that he who would seek God, and is yet unwilling to forsake his sins, shall not find him, because he seeks not aright; and, therefore, it is added, "Ye shall die in your sins." On the other hand, he, who diligently seeks God, in his heart, and that he may draw near unto him, sincerely forsakes his sin, shall infallibly find him.

A life of piety appears so formidable, and the spirit of prayer of such difficult attainment, that most persons are discouraged from taking a single step towards it. The difficulties inseparable from all great undertakings, are, indeed, either nobly surmounted, or left to subsist in all their terrors, just as success is the object of despair or hope. I have, therefore, endeavoured to show the facility of the method proposed in this treatise, the great advantages to be derived from it, and the certainty of their attainment by those that faithfully persevere. O were we once truly sensible of the goodness of God toward his poor creatures, and of his infinite desire to communicate himself unto them, we should not affright ourselves with ideal monsters, nor despair of obtaining that good which he is so earnest to bestow: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?" (Rom. vii. 32.) But we want courage and perseverance; we have both, to a high degree, in our temporal concerns, but want them in "the one thing needful." (Luke x. 42.)

If any think, that God is not easily to be found in this way of simple love and pure adherence, let them not, on my testimony, alter their



opinion, but rather make trial of it; and their own experience will convince them, that the reality far exceeds all my representations of it.

Beloved reader, peruse this little tract with an humble, sincere and candid spirit, and not with an inclination to cavil and criticise, and you will not fail to reap some degree of profit from it. It was written with a hearty desire that you might wholly devote yourself to God; receive it then, with a like desire for your own perfection: for nothing more is intended by it, than to invite the simple and the child-like to approach their FATHER, who delights in the humble confidence of his children, and is grieved at the smallest instance of their diffidence or distrust. With a sincere desire, therefore, to forsake sin, seek nothing from the inartificial method here proposed, but the love of God, and you shall undoubtedly obtain it.

Without setting up our opinions above those of others, we mean only with truth and candour, to declare, from our own experience and the experience of others, the happy effects produced by thus simply following our Lord.

As this treatise was intended only to instruct in prayer, there are many things which we respect and esteem, totally omitted, as not immediately relative to our main subject: it is, however, certain, that nothing will be found herein to disgust or offend, provided it be read in the spirit with which it was written; and it is still more certain, that those who in right earnest make trial of the way, will find we have written the truth.

It is thou alone, O holy Jesus, who lovest simplicity and innocence, "and whose delight is to dwell with the children of men," (Prov. viii. 3.) with those who are, indeed, willing to become "little children;" it is thou alone, who canst render this little work salutary! Imprint it then on the hearts of all who read it, and lead them to seek thee within themselves, where thou reposest as in the manger, waiting to receive proofs of their love, and to give them testimony of thine. Yet, alas! they may still lose these unspeakable advantages by their negligence and insensibility! But it belongeth unto thee, O thou uncreated love! thou silent and eternal Word! it belongeth unto thee, to awaken, attract, and convert; to make thyself be heard, tasted, and beloved! I know thou canst do it; and I trust thou wilt do it by this humble work, which belongeth entirely to thee, proceedeth wholly from thee, and tendeth only to thee! And, O most gracious and adorable Saviour! to thee be all the glory!

## A SHORT AND EASY

# METHOD OF PRAYER.

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### THAT ALL ARE CAPABLE OF PRAYER.

WHAT a dreadful delusion hath prevailed over the greater part of mankind, in supposing that they are not called to a state of prayer! whereas all are capable of prayer, and are called thereto, as all are called to and are capable of salvation.

Prayer is the application ~~to~~ <sup>of</sup> the heart ~~of~~ <sup>to</sup> God, and the internal exercise of love. St. Paul hath enjoined us to "pray without ceasing;" 1 Thess. v. 17. and our Lord saith, "I say unto you all, watch and pray." Mark xiii. 33. 37. and all therefore may, and all ought to practise prayer. I grant that meditation is attainable but by few, for few are capable of it; and therefore my beloved brethren, who are athirst for salvation, meditative prayer is not the prayer which God requires of you, nor which we would recommend.

Let all pray: we should live by prayer, as we should live by love. "I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that ye may be rich;" Rev. iii. 8. this is much more easily obtained than we can conceive. "Come all ye that are athirst to the living waters;" nor lose your precious moments in "hewing out cisterns that will hold no water." John vii. 37. Jerem. ii. 13. Come ye famishing souls, who find nought whereon to feed; come and ye shall be fully satisfied! Come, ye poor afflicted ones, who groan beneath your load of wretchedness and pain, and ye shall find ease and comfort! Come, ye sick, to your physician, and be not fearful of approaching him, because you are filled with diseases; expose them to his view, and they shall be healed! Children draw near to your Father, and he will

embrace you in the arms of love! Come ye poor, stray, wandering sheep, return to your Shepherd! Come, sinners, to your Saviour! Come ye dull, ignorant, and illiterate, ye who think yourselves the most incapable of prayer! ye are more peculiarly called and adapted thereto. Let all without exception come, for Jesus Christ hath called all. Yet let not those come, who are without a heart; they are not asked; for there must be a heart, that there may be love. But who is without a heart? O come, then, give this heart to God; and here learn how to make the donation. All who are desirous of prayer, may easily pray, enabled by those ordinary graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit which are common to all men.

Prayer is the guide to perfection, and the sovereign good; it delivers us from every vice, and obtains us every virtue; for the one great means to become perfect, is to walk in the presence of God: he himself hath said, "walk in my presence and be ye perfect." Gen. xvii. 1. It is by prayer alone that we are brought into this presence, and maintained in it without interruption.

You must then learn a species of prayer, which may be exercised at all times; which doth not obstruct outward employments; and which may be equally practised by princes, kings, prelates, priests and magistrates, soldiers and children, tradesmen, labourers, women and sick persons: it cannot therefore be the prayer of the head, but of the heart; not a prayer of the understanding alone, which is so limited in its operations that it can have but one object at one time; but the prayer of the heart is not interrupted by the exercises of reason: indeed nothing can interrupt this prayer, but irregular and disordered affections: and when once we have tasted of God, and the sweetness of his love, we shall find it impossible to relish ought but himself.

Nothing is so easily obtained as the possession and enjoyment of God, for "in him we live, move and have our

being;" and he is more desirous to give himself into us, than we can be to receive him; and to seek aright, is easier and more natural to us than breathing. Though, you think yourselves ever so stupid, dull, incapable of sublime attainments, yet by prayer, you may live in God himself with less difficulty or interruption that you live in the vital air. Will it not be highly sinful to neglect prayer? but this I trust you will not, when you have learnt the method, which is exceedingly easy.

#### THE METHOD OF PRAYING.

THERE are two ways of introducing a soul into prayer, which should for some time be pursued; the one is meditation, the other is reading accompanied with meditation.

Meditative reading is the choosing some important practical or speculative truth, always preferring the practical, and proceeding thus: whatever truth you have chosen, read only a small portion of it, endeavouring to taste and digest it, to extract the essence and substance thereof, and proceed no farther while any savour or relish remains in the passage: when this subsides, take up your book again, and proceed as before, seldom reading more than half a page at a time; for it is not the quantity that is read, but the manner of reading, that yields us profit. Those who read fast, reap no more advantage, than a bee would by only skimming over the surface of the flower, instead of waiting to penetrate into it, and extract its sweets. Much reading is rather for scholastic subjects, than divine truths: indeed to receive real profit from spiritual books, we must read as I have described; and I am certain if that method were pursued, we should become gradually habituated to, and more fully disposed for prayer.

Meditation which is the other method, is to be practised at an appropriated season, and not in the time of reading. I believe the best manner of meditating is as follows. When

by any act of lively faith, you are placed in the presence of God, recollect some truth wherein there is substance and food : pause gently and sweetly thereon, not to employ the reason, but merely to calm and fix the mind : for you must observe, that your particular exercise should ever be the presence of God ; your subject therefore, should rather serve to stay the mind, than exercise the understanding. From this procedure, it will necessarily follow, that the lively faith in a God immediately present in our inmost soul, will produce an eager and vehement pressing inwardly into ourselves, and restraining all our senses from wandering abroad : this serves to extricate us speedily from numberless distractions, to remove us far from external objects, and to bring us nigh unto our God, who is only to be found in our inmost centre, which is the Holy of Holies wherein he dwelleth. He hath even promised "to come and make his abode with him that doeth his will." John. xiv. 23. St. Augustine accuses himself of wasting his time, by not having from the first sought God in this manner of prayer.

When we are thus fully introverted, and warmly penetrated throughout with a lively sense of the Divine presence ; when the senses are all recollected, and withdrawn from the circumference to the centre, and the soul is sweetly and silently employed on the truths we have read, not in reasoning, but in feeding thereon, and animating the will by affection, rather than fatiguing the understanding by study ; when, I say, the affections are in this state, which, however difficult it may appear at first, is, as I shall hereafter shew, easily attainable ; we must allow them sweetly to repose, and peacefully to drink in that of which they have tasted : for as a person may enjoy the flavour of the finest vian in mastication, yet receive no nourishment therefrom, if he does not cease the action and swallow the food ; so when our affections enkindled, if we endeavour to stir them up yet more,

we extinguish the flame, and the soul is deprived of its nourishment ; we should therefore, in stillness and repose, with respect, confidence and love, swallow the blessed food of which we have tasted : this method is, indeed highly necessary ; and will advance the soul better in a short time, than any other in a course of years.

I have mentioned, that our direct and principal exercise should consist in the contemplation of the Divine presence ; we should be also exceedingly watchful and diligent in recalling our dissipated senses, as the most easy method of overcoming distractions ; for a direct contest and opposition only serves to irritate and augment them ; whereas, by sinking down under a sense and perception of a present God, and by simply turning inwards, we wage insensibly a very advantageous, though indirect war with them.

It is proper here to caution beginners against wandering from truth to truth, and from subject to subject: the right way to penetrate every divine truth, to enjoy its full relish, and to imprint it on the heart, is dwelling on it whilst its savour continues:

Though recollection is difficult in the beginning, from the habit the soul has acquired of being always from home; yet, when by the violence it hath done itself, it becometh a little accustomed to it, it will soon be rendered perfectly easy, and become delightful. Such is the experimental taste, and sense of his presence, and such the efficacy of those graces, which that God bestows, whose one will towards his creatures is to communicate himself to them.

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE WHO ARE WHOLLY ILLITERATE.

THOSE who have not been learned to read, are not, on that account, excluded from prayer; for the great book which teacheth all things, and which is legible as well internally as externally, is Jesus Christ himself.

The method they should practise is this: they should

first learn this fundamental rule, that the kingdom of "God is within them," Luke xvii. 21. and that it is there only it must be sought.

It is as incumbent on the clergy to instruct their parishioners in prayer, as in their catechism. It is true they tell them the end of their creation; but should they not give them sufficient instructions how they may attain it? They should be taught to begin by an act of profound adoration and abasement before God; and closing the corporeal eyes, endeavour to open those of the soul; they should then collect themselves inwardly, and by a lively faith in God, as dwelling within them, pierce into the divine presence; not suffering the senses to wander abroad, but withholding them as much as may be in due subjection.

They should then repeat the Lord's prayer in their native tongue; pondering a little upon the meaning of the words, and the infinite willingness of that God who dwells within them, to become, indeed, "their father." In this state let them pour out their wants before him; and when they have pronounced the endearing word, "father," remain a few moments in a respectful silence, waiting to have the will of this their heavenly father made manifest unto them. Again beholding themselves in the state of a feeble child, sorely bruised by repeated falls, and defiled in the mire, destitute of strength to keep up, or of power to cleanse himself, they should lay their deplorable situation open to their father's view in humble confusion; now sighing out a few words of love and plaintive sorrow, and again sinking into profound silence before him. Then continuing the Lord's prayer, let them beseech this king of glory to reign in them, yielding to his love the just claim he has over them, and resigning up themselves wholly to his divine government.

If they feel an inclination to peace and silence, let them continue the words of the prayer so long as this sensation holds; and when it subsides go on with the second petition,

“thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!” upon which these humble supplicants must beseech God to accomplish in them, and by them, all his will; and must surrender their hearts and freedom into his hands, to be disposed of as he pleaseth. And finding that the best employment of the will is to love, they should desire to love God with all their strength, and implore him for his pure love; but all this sweetly and peacefully: and so of the rest of the prayer, in which the clergy may instruct them. But they should not overburthen themselves with frequent repetitions of set forms, or studied prayers; **Matt. vi. 7.** for the Lord’s prayer once repeated as I have just described, will produce abundant fruit.

At other times they should place themselves as sheep before their shepherd, looking up to him for their true substantial food: “O divine Shepherd, thou feedest thy flock with thyself, and art indeed, their daily nourishment!” They may also represent unto him the necessities of their families: but all upon this principle, and in this one great view of faith, that “God is within them.”

The ideas we form of the Divine Being fall infinitely short of what he is: a lively faith in his presence is sufficient: for we must not form any image of the Deity; though we may of the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity, beholding him in the various states of his incarnation, from his birth to his crucifixion, or in some other state or mystery, provided the soul always seeks for those views in its inmost ground or centre. Again, we may look to him as our physician at present, to his healing influence of all our maladies; but always without violence or perturbation; and from time to time without pauses of silence, that being intermingled with the action, the silence may be gradually extended, and our own exertion lessened; till at length by continually yielding to God’s operations, they gain the complete ascendancy, as shall be hereafter explained.



When the divine presence is granted us, and we gradually relish silence and repose, this experimental feeling and taste of the presence of God introduces the soul into the second degree of prayer, which, by proceeding in the manner I have described, is attainable as well by the illiterate, as the learned: some favoured souls indeed are indulged with it, even from the beginning.

#### OF THE SECOND DEGREE OF PRAYER.

SOME call the second degree of prayer, "The prayer of contemplation," the "prayer of faith and stillness:" and others call it, "The prayer of simplicity." I shall here use this latter appellation, as being more just than any of the former, which imply a much more exalted state of prayer than that I am now treating of.

When the soul has been for sometime exercised in the way I have mentioned, she finds that she is gradually enabled to approach God with facility; that recollection is attended with much less difficulty; and that prayer becomes easy, sweet and delightful: she knows that this is the true way of finding God: and she feels "his name is as ointment poured forth." Cant. i. 3. But the method must now be altered, and that which I prescribe, followed with courage and fidelity, without being disturbed at the difficulties we may encounter therein.

First, as soon as the soul by faith places herself in "The presence of God," and becomes recollected before him, let her remain thus for a little time in a profound and respectful silence.

But if, at the beginning, in forming her act of faith she feels some little pleasing sense of the Divine presence; let her remain there without being troubled for a subject, and proceed no farther, but carefully cherish this sensation while it continues: as soon as it abates, she may excite the will by some tender affection; and if by the first moving

thereof, she finds herself reinstated in her sweet peace, let her there remain: the smothered fire must be gently fanned, but as soon as it is kindled, we must cease that effort lest we extinguish it by our own activity. I would warmly recommend it to all, never to finish prayer, without remaining some little time after in a respectful silence. It is also of the greatest importance, for the soul to go to prayer with courage; and such a pure and disinterested love, as seeks nothing from God, but the ability to please him, and to do his will: for a servant who only proportions his diligence to his hope of reward, renders himself unworthy of all reward. Go then to prayer, not that ye may enjoy spiritual delights, but that ye may be either full or empty, just as it pleaseth God: this will preserve you in an evenness of spirit, in desertion as well as in consolation, and prevent your being surprized at aridity or the apparent repulses of God.

## OF SPIRITUAL ARIDITY.

THOUGH God hath no other desire than to impart himself to the loving soul that seeks him, yet he frequently conceals himself from her, that she may be roused from sloth, and impelled to seek him with fidelity and love. But with what abundant goodness doth he recompence the faithfulness of his beloved? And how sweetly are these apparent withdrawals of himself succeeded by the consoling caresses of love? At these seasons, we are apt to believe, either that it proves our fidelity, and evinces a greater ardour of affection to seek him by an exertion of our own strength and activity; or that this exertion will induce him the more speedily to revisit us. No, no, my dear souls, believe me, this is not the right procedure in this degree of prayer; with patient love, with self abasement and humiliation, with the reiterated breathings of an ardent but peaceful affection, and with silence full of the most profound respect, you must

wait the return of the Beloved: thus only you will demonstrate, that it is himself alone, and his good pleasure, that you seek: and not the selfish delights of your own sensations. Hence it is said, Eccles. ii. 2, 3. "Be not impatient in the time of dryness and obscurity; suffer the suspensions and delays of the consolations of God; cleave unto him, and wait upon him patiently, that thy life may increase and be renewed."

Be ye therefore patient in prayer, though, during life, you can do nothing else than wait the return of the beloved, in deep humiliation, calm contentment, and patient resignation to his will. And yet how this most excellent prayer may be intermingled with the sighings of plaintive love! This conduct indeed, is most pleasing to the heart of Jesus; and, above all others, will, as it were, compel him to return.

#### OF ABANDONMENT, OR RESIGNATION.

It is now we should begin to abandon and give up our whole existence unto God, from the strong and positive conviction, that the occurrence of every moment is agreeable to his immediate will and permission, and just such as our state requires. This conviction will make us resigned in all things; and accept of all that happens, not as from the creature, but as from God himself.

But I conjure you, my dearly beloved, who sincerely wish to give up yourselves to God, that after you have made the donation, you will not snatch yourself back again; remember, a gift once presented, is no longer at the disposal of the donor.

Abandonment is a matter of the greatest importance in our process; it is the key to the inner court; so that whosoever knoweth truly how to abandon himself, soon becomes perfect: we must, therefore, continue steadfast and immovable therein; nor listen to the voice of natural reason, Great faith produces great abandonment: we must confide in God, "hoping against hope." Rom. iv. 18.

Abandonment is the casting off all selfish care, that we may be altogether at the divine disposal. All Christians are exhorted to this resignation; for it is said to all, "be not anxious for to-morrow; for your Heavenly Father knoweth all that is necessary for you." Matt. xx. 25. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. iii. 6. "Commit thy ways unto the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established." Prov. xvi. '3. "Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and he himself will bring it to pass." Psalm. xxxvi. 5.

Our abandonment then should be as fully applied to external as internal things, giving up all our concerns into the hands of God, forgetting ourselves and thinking only of him; by which the heart will remain always disengaged, free, and at peace. It is practised by continually losing our own will in the will of God; by renouncing every particular inclination as soon as it arises, however good it may appear, that we may stand in indifference with respect to ourselves, and only will that which God from eternity had willed; by being resigned in all things, whether for soul or body, whether for time or eternity; by leaving what is past in oblivion; what is to come to Providence, and devoting the present moment to God, which brings with itself God's eternal order, and is as infallible a declaration to us of his will, as it is inevitable and common to all; by attributing nothing that befalls us to the creature, but regarding all things in God, and looking upon all, excepting only our sins, as infallibly proceeding from him. Surrender yourselves then to be led and disposed of just as God pleaseth, with respect both to your outward and inward state.

#### OF SUFFERINGS.

BE ye patient under all the sufferings which God is pleased to send you: if your love to him be pure; you will not seek him less on Calvary, than on Tabor; and surely, he should

be as much loved on that as on this, since it was on Calvary he made the greater display of his own love for you.

Be not like those who give themselves to him at one season, and withdraw from him at another: they give themselves only to be caressed: and wrest themselves back again, when they come to be crucified, or at least turn for consolation to the creature.

No, beloved souls, ye will not find consolation in ought but in the love of the cross, and in total abandonment; who savoureth not the cross, savoureth not the things that be of God. Matt. xvi. 23. It is impossible to love God without loving the cross; and a heart that savours the cross, finds the bitterest things to be sweet: "A famished soul findeth bitter things sweet:" Job. vi. 1. because she findeth herself an hungered for her God, in proportion as she findeth herself an hungered for the cross. God giveth the cross, and the cross giveth us God.

We may be assured, that there is an internal advancement, where there is an advancement in the way of the cross: abandonment and the cross go hand in hand together.

As soon as any thing presents itself, as a suffering, and you feel a repugnance against it, resign yourself immediately unto God with respect to it, and give yourself up to him in sacrifice; you shall find, that when the cross arrives, it will not be so very burthensome, because you have disposed yourself to a willing reception of it. This, however, does not prevent you from feeling its weight, as some have imagined: for when we do not feel the cross, we do not suffer it. A sensibility of sufferings constitutes a principal part of the sufferings themselves. Jesus Christ himself was willing to suffer its utmost rigours. We often bear the cross in weakness, at other times in strength: all should be equal to us in the will of God.

## OF MYSTERIES.

It may be objected, that, by this method, we shall have no mysteries imprinted on our minds : but it is quite the reverse ; for it is the peculiar means of imparting them to the soul. Jesus Christ, to whom we are abandoned, and whom, “ we follow as the way, whom we hear as the truth, and who animates us as the life,” John xiv. 6. in imprinting himself on the soul, impressing the characters of his different states : and to bear all the states of Jesus Christ, is far more sublime, than merely to reason concerning them. St. Paul bore in his body the states of Jesus Christ : “ I bear in my body,” says he, “ the marks of the Lord Jesus ;” Gal. vi. 17. but he does not say that he reasoned thereon.

In our act of resignation, Jesus Christ frequently communicates some peculiar views, or revelations of his states : these we should thankfully receive, and dispose ourselves for what appeareth to be his will. Indeed having no other choice, but that of ardently reaching after him, of dwelling ever with him, and of sinking into nothingness before him, we should accept indiscriminately all his dispensations, whether obscurity or illumination, fecundity or barrenness, imbecility or strength, sweetness or bitterness, temptations, distractions, pain, weariness, or doubtings ; and none of all these should, for one moment, retard our course. God engages some, for whole years, in the contemplation and enjoyment of a particular mystery ; the simple view or contemplation of which gathers the soul inward, provided it be faithful : but as soon as God is pleased to withdraw this view from the soul, it should freely yield to the deprivation. Some are very uneasy at seeing their inability to meditate on certain mysteries ; but this disquietude hath no just foundation, since an affectionate attachment to God includes in itself every species of devotion ; for whosoever, in repose and quiet is united to God alone, is, indeed, most ex-

cellently and effectually applied to every divine mystery : the love of God comprehends in itself, the love of all that appertains to him.

#### OF VIRTUE.

It is thus we acquire virtue, with facility and certainty; for as God is the fountain and principle of all virtue, we possess all in the possession of himself; and in proportion as we approach toward his possession, in like proportion do we rise into the most eminent virtues. For all virtue is but as a mask, an outside appearance mutable as our garments, if it doth not spring up, and then indeed it is genuine, essential, and permanent : “ The beauty of the King’s daughter proceeds from within,” saith David. Psal. xlv. 14. These souls above all others practise virtue in the most eminent degree, though they advert not to any particular virtue: God, to whom they are united, carries them to the most extensive practice of it; he is exceedingly jealous over them, and prohibits them the taste of any pleasure but in himself. What a hungering for sufferings have those souls, who thus glow with divine love! how prone to precipitate into excessive austerities, were they permitted to pursue their own inclinations! They think of nought save how they may please their Beloved: as their self-love abates, they neglect and forget themselves; and as their love to God increases, so do self-detestation and disregard to the creature. O was this easy method acquired, a method so suited to all, to the dull and ignorant as well as to the acute and learned, how easily would the whole church of God be reformed! Love only is required: “ Love,” saith St. Austin, “and then do what you please.” For when we truly love, we cannot have so much as a will to any thing that might offend the object of our affections.

## OF MORTIFICATION.

I WILL even affirm, that, in any other way, it is next to an impossibility to acquire a perfect mortification of the senses and passions. The reason is obvious; the soul gives vigour and energy to the senses, and the senses rise and stimulate the passions: a dead body has neither sensations, nor passions, because its connection with the soul is dissolved.

All endeavours merely to rectify the exterior, impel the soul yet farther outward into that about which she is so warmly and zealously engaged. It is in these matters, that her powers are diffused and scattered abroad; for her application being immediately directed to austerities, and other externals, she thus invigorates those very senses she is aiming to subdue. For the senses have no other spring from whence to derive their vigour than the application of the soul to themselves; the degree of their life and activity is proportioned to the degree of attention which the soul bestows upon them; and this life of the senses stirs up and provokes the passions, instead of suppressing or subduing them: austerities may, indeed, enfeeble the body, but for the reasons just mentioned, can never take off the keenness of the senses, or lessen their activity. The one only method to effect this, is inward recollection; by which the soul is turned, wholly and altogether inward, to possess a present God. If she directs all her vigour and energy towards this centre of her being, the simple act separates and withdraws her from the senses; the exercising all her powers internally, leaves them faint and impotent; and the nearer she draws to God, the farther is she separated from the senses, and the less are the passions influenced by them.

Hence it is, that those in whom the attractions of grace are very powerful, find the outward man altogether weak and feeble, and even liable to faintings. I do not mean, by this, to discourage mortification; for it should ever accom-



pany prayer, according to the strength and state of the person, or as obedience will allow. But I say, that mortification should not be our principal exercise; nor should we prescribe ourselves such and such austerities, but follow simply and merely the internal attractions of grace; and being possessed and occupied with the divine presence (without thinking particularly on mortification) God will enable us to perform every species of it; and most assuredly, he will give no relaxation to those who abide faithfully in their abandonment to him, until he has mortified in them every thing that remains to be mortified. We have only then to continue steadfast in the utmost attention to God, and all things will be rightly performed. All are not capable of outward austerities, but all are capable of this. In the mortification of the eye and ear, which continually supply the busy imagination with new subjects, there is little danger of falling into excess; but God will teach us this also, and we have only to follow where his spirit guides.

The soul has a double advantage by proceeding thus; for, in withdrawing from outward objects, she draws the nearer to God; and in approaching him, besides the secret sustaining and preserving power and virtue she receives, she is farther removed from sin, the nearer her approaches are made; so that conversing becomes habitual.

#### OF CONVERSION.

“BE ye truly converted unto that God from whom ye have so deeply revolted.” Isa. xxxi. 6. To be truly converted is to avert wholly from the creature, and turn wholly unto God.

For the attainment of salvation, it is absolutely necessary, that we should forsake outward sin, and turn unto righteousness: but this alone is not perfect conversion, which consists in a total change of the whole man from an outward to an inward life.

When the soul is once turned to God, she finds a wonderful facility in continuing steadfast in her conversion; and the longer she remains thus converted, the nearer she approaches, and the more firmly she adheres to God; and the nearer she draws to him, of necessity she is the farther removed from the creature, which is so contrary to him: so that she is so effectually established and rooted in her conversion, that it becomes habitual, and as it were natural to her. Now we must not suppose, that this is effected by a violent exertion of her own powers; for she is not capable of; nor should she attempt any other co-operation with divine grace, than that of endeavouring to withdraw herself from external objects, and to turn inwards: after which she has nothing farther to do, than to continue steadfast in her adherence to God.

God has an attractive virtue which draws the soul more and more powerfully to himself, the nearer she approaches towards him, and in attracting, he purifies and refines her; just as it is with a gross vapour exhaled by the sun, which as it gradually ascends, is rarified and rendered pure: the vapour indeed, contributes to its exhalation only by its passiveness; but the soul co-operates with the attractions of her God, by a free and affectionate correspondence. This kind of introversion is both easy and efficacious, advancing the soul naturally, and without constraint, because God himself is her centre.

Every centre has a powerful attractive virtue; and the more pure and exalted it is, the stronger and more irresistible are its attractions. But besides the potent magnetism of the centre itself, there is, in every creature, a correspondent tendency to re-union with its peculiar centre, which is vigorous and active in proportion to the spirituality and perfection of the subject.

As soon as any thing is turned towards its centre, its own gravitation instigates and accelerates it thereto, unless it be

withheld by some invincible obstacle : a stone held in the hand is no sooner disengaged, than by its own weight it falls to the earth as to its centre ; so also water and fire, when unobstructed, tend and flow incessantly to their principle or centre. Now when the soul by its efforts to abandon outward objects, and gather herself inwards, is brought into the influence of the central tendency ; without any other exertion, she falls gradually by the weight of divine love, into her proper centre ; and the more passive and tranquil she remains, and the freer from self-motion and self-exertion, the more rapidly she advances, because the energy of the central attractive virtue is unobstructed, and has full liberty for action.

All our care and attention should therefore be to acquire inward recollection : nor let us be discouraged by the pains and difficulties we encounter in this exercise, which will soon be recompensed on the part of our God, by such abundant supplies of grace, as will render the exercise perfectly easy, provided we be faithful in meekly withdrawing our hearts from outward distractions and occupations, and returning to our centre, with affections full of tenderness and serenity. When at any time the passions are turbulent, a gentle retreat inwards unto a present God, easily deadens and pacifies them ; and any other way of contending with them, rather irritates than appeases them.

#### OF THE PRAYER OF THE SIMPLE PRESENCE OF GOD.

THE soul that is faithful in the exercise of love and adherence to God above described, is astonished to feel him gradually taking possession of her whole being ; she now enjoys a continual sense of that presence, which is become as it were natural to her ; and this, as well as prayer, is the result of habit. She feels an unusual serenity gradually diffusing itself throughout all her faculties ; and silence now wholly constitutes her prayer ; whilst God commu-

nicates an infused love, which is the beginning of ineffable blessedness. O that I were permitted to pursue this subject, and describe some degrees of the endless progression of subsequent states ! But I now write only for beginners ; and shall therefore proceed no farther, but wait our Lord's time for publishing what may be applicable to every conceivable degree of " stature in Christ Jesus."

We must, however, urge it as a matter of the highest import, to cease from self-action and self-exertion, that God himself may act alone : he saith by the mouth of his prophet David, " Be still and know that I am God." Psalm xlv. 10. But the creature is so infatuated with a love and attachment to its own working, that it doth not perceive and distinguish all its operations. She is ignorant that her inability minutely to observe the manner of her motion, is occasioned by the swiftness of her progress ; and that the operations of God, in extending and diffusing their influence, absorb those of the creature. The stars may be seen distinctly before the sun rises ; but as his light advances, their rays are gradually absorbed by his ; and they become invisible, not from the want of light in themselves, but from the superior effulgence of their chief luminary.

The case is similar here ; for there is a strong and universal light which absorbs all the little distinct lights of the soul ; they grow faint and disappear under its powerful influence, and self-activity is now no longer distinguishable : yet those greatly err, who accuse this prayer of idleness, a charge that can only arise from inexperience. If they would but make some efforts towards the attainment of this prayer, they would soon experience the contrary of what they suppose, and find their accusation groundless.

This appearance of inaction is, indeed, not the consequence of sterility and want, but of fruitfulness and abundance ; which will be clearly perceived by the experienced soul, who will know and feel that her silence is full and

unctuous, and the result of causes totally the reverse of apathy and barrenness. There are two kinds of people that keep silence; the one because they have nothing to say, the other because they have too much: it is so with the soul in this state; her silence is occasioned by the super-abundance of matter, too great for utterance.

To be drowned, and to die of thirst, are deaths widely different; yet water may, in some sense, be said to cause both; abundance destroys in one case, and want in the other. So in this state the abundance and overflowing of grace still the activity of self; and therefore, it is of the utmost importance to remain as silent as possible.

The infant hanging at the mother's breast, is a lively illustration of our subject: it begins to draw the milk, by moving its little lips; but when the milk flows abundantly, it is content to swallow, and suspend its suction; by doing otherwise, it would only hurt itself, spill the milk, and be obliged to quit the breast.

We must act in like manner in the beginning of prayer, by exerting the lip of the affections; but as soon as the milk of divine grace flows freely, we have nothing to do, but, in repose and stillness, sweetly to imbibe it; and when it ceases to flow, we must again stir up the affections as the infant moves its lips. Whoever acts otherwise, cannot turn this grace to advantage; which is bestowed, to allure and draw the soul into the repose of love, and not into the multiplicity of self.

But what becometh of this child, who gently and without motion drinketh in the milk? Who could believe that it can thus receive nourishment? Yet the more peacefully it feeds, the better it thrives. What, I say, becomes of this infant? It drops gently asleep on its mother's bosom. So the soul that is tranquil and peaceful in prayer, sinketh frequently into a mystic slumber, wherein all her powers are at rest; till at length she is wholly fitted for that state,

of which she enjoys these transient anticipations. In this process the soul is led naturally, without effort, art or study.

The interior is not a strong hold, to be taken by storm and violence ; but a kingdom of peace, which is to be gained only by love.

If any will thus pursue the little path I have pointed out, it will lead them to infused prayer. God demands nothing extraordinary nor difficult ; on the contrary, he is best pleased by a simple and child-like conduct.

That which is most sublime and elevated in religion, is the easiest attained : the most necessary sacraments are the least difficult. It is thus also in natural things : if you would go to sea, embark on a river, and you will be conveyed to it insensibly and without exertion. Would you go to God, follow this sweet and simple path, and you will arrive at the desired object, with an ease and expedition that will amaze you, O that you would but once make the trial ! how soon would you find that all I have advanced falls short of the reality, and that your own experience will carry you infinitely beyond it ! Is it fear that prevents you from instantly casting yourself into those arms of love which were widely extended on the cross only to receive you ? Whence can your fears arise ? What risk do you run in depending solely on your God, and abandoning yourself wholly unto him ? Ah ! he will not deceive you, unless by bestowing an abundance beyond your highest hopes : but those who expect all from themselves, will inevitably be deceived, and must suffer this rebuke of God by his prophet Isaiah, " Ye have wearied yourselves in the multiplicity of your ways, and have not said let us rest in peace." Isa. lvii. 10. *vulgate.*

#### OF REST BEFORE GOD.

THE soul advanced thus far, hath no need of any other preparative than its quietude : for now the presence of God,

which is the great effect, or rather continuation of prayer, begins to be infused, and almost without intermission. The soul certainly enjoys transcendent blessedness, and feels that "it is no longer she that lives but Christ that liveth in her;" and that the only way to find him is introversion. She no sooner closeth her bodily eyes than she is wrapt up in prayer: she is amazed at so great a blessing, and enjoys an internal converse, which external matters cannot interrupt. The same may be said of this species of prayer, that is said of wisdom: "all good things come together with her." (Wisdom vii. 11.) For the virtues flow from this soul into exertion with so much sweetness and facility, that they appear natural and spontaneous: and the living spring within breaks forth so freely and abundantly into all goodness, that she becomes even insensible to evil. Let her then remain faithful in this state; and be aware of choosing or seeking any other disposition whatsoever than this simple rest, as a preparative either to confession or communion, to action or prayer: for her sole business is to expand herself for the full reception of the divine infusions. I would not be understood to speak of the preparations necessary for the sacraments, but of the most perfect dispositions in which they can be received.

#### OF INTERNAL SILENCE.

"THE Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him." (Hab. ii. 20.) Inward silence is absolutely indispensable, because the Word is essential and eternal, and necessarily requires dispositions in the soul in some degree correspondent to his nature, as a capacity for the reception of himself. Hearing is a sense formed to receive sounds, and is rather passive than active, admitting, but not communicating sensation; and if we would hear, we must lend the ear for that purpose; so Christ the eternal Word, without whose divine inspeaking the soul is dead, dark and

barren, when he would speak within us, requires the most silent attention to his all-quickening and efficacious voice.

Hence it is so frequently enjoined us in sacred writ, to hear and be attentive to the voice of God : of the numerous exhortations to this effect, I shall quote a few : "Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation !" Isa. li. 4. and again, "hear me, all ye whom I carry in my bosom, and bear within my bowels." Isa. xlv. 3. and farther by the Psalmist, "Hearken, O daughter ! and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." Psal. xlv. 10, 11.

We should forget ourselves, and all self-interest, and listen and be attentive to the voice of our God : and these two simple actions, or rather passive dispositions, attract his love to that beauty, which he himself communicates. Outward silence is very requisite for the cultivation and improvement of inward ; and, indeed, it is impossible we should become truly internal, without the love and practice of outward silence and retirement. God saith by the mouth of his prophet, "I will lead her into solitude, and there will I speak to her heart : " Hos. ii. 14. vulg. and unquestionably the being internally engaged with God, is wholly incompatible with being busied, and employed in the numerous trifles that surround us. Luke xxxviii. 42.

When through imbecility or unfaithfulness we become dissipated, or as it were un-centered, it is of immediate importance to turn again gently and sweetly inward ; and thus we may learn to preserve the spirit and unction of prayer, throughout the day ; for if prayer and recollection were wholly confined to any appointed half hour, or hour, we should reap but little fruit.

#### OF CONFESSION AND SELF-EXAMINATION.

SELF-EXAMINATION should always precede confession, and in the nature and manner of it should be conformable to



the state of the soul : the business of those that are advanced to the degree of which we now treat, is to lay their whole souls open before God, who will not fail to enlighten them, and enable them to see the peculiar nature of their faults. This examination, however, should be peaceful and tranquil ; and we should depend on God for the discovery and knowledge of our sins, rather than on the diligence of our own scrutiny.

When we examine with constraint, and in the strength of our own endeavours, we are easily deceived and betrayed by self-love into error ; “ we believe the evil good and the good evil :” Isa. v. 20. but when we lie in full exposure before the Sun of Righteousness, his divine beams render the smallest atoms visible. It follows from hence, that we must forsake self, and abandon our souls to God, as well in examination as confession.

When souls have attained to this species of prayer, no fault escapes reprehension ; on every commission, they are instantly rebuked by an inward burning and tender confusion ! such is the scrutiny of him who suffers no evil to be concealed ; and under its purifying influence, the one way is to turn affectionately to our judge, and bear with meekness the pain and correction he inflicts. He becomes the incessant examiner of the soul ; she can now indeed, no longer examine herself ; and if she be faithful in her resignation, experience will convince her that she is a thousand times more effectually examined by his divine light, than by her own most active and vigorous inspection.

\* Those who tread these paths should be informed of a matter respecting their confession, in which they are apt to err. When they begin to give an account of their sins, instead of the regret and contrition they had been accus-

\* Though this instruction relates immediately to the customs of the Romish church, it is however very applicable to all Christians on their approaching the Lord's table, and at other seasons of solemn confession.

tomed to feel, they find that love and tranquillity sweetly pervade and take possession of their souls : now those who are not properly instructed, are desirous of withdrawing from this sensation, to form an act of contrition ; because they have heard, and with truth, that it is requisite : but they are not aware, that they lose thereby the genuine contrition, which is this infused love, infinitely surpassing any effect produced by self-exertion, and comprehending the other acts in itself as in one principal act, in much higher perfection, than if they were distinctly perceived, and varied in their sensation. Be not then troubled about other things, when God acts so excellently in you and for you.

To hate sin in this manner, is to hate it as God does.— The purest love is that which is of his immediate operation in the soul : why should she then be so eager for action ? Let her remain in the state he assigns it, agreeably to the instructions of Solomon : “ Put your confidence in God ; remain in quiet where he hath placed you.” Eccles. xi. 22.

The soul will also be amazed at finding a difficulty in calling her faults to remembrance : this, however, should cause no uneasiness ; first, because this forgetfulness of our faults is some proof of our purification from them ; and in this degree of advancement it is best : secondly, because, when confession is our duty, God will not fail to make known to us our greatest faults ; for then he himself examines ; and the soul will feel the end of examination more perfectly accomplished, than if it could possibly have been by the utmost exertion of our own endeavours.

These instructions, however, would be altogether unsuitable to the preceding degrees, while the soul continues in her active state ; wherein it is right and necessary she should in all things use her utmost industry, in proportion to the degree of her advancement. It is those that have arrived to this more advanced state, whom I would exhort to follow these instructions, and not to vary their one simple occupa-

tion even on approaching the communion ; they should remain in silence, and suffer God to act freely and without limitation. Who can better receive the body and blood of Christ, than he in whom the Holy Spirit is indwelling ?

#### OF READING AND VOCAL PRAYER.

IF, while reading, you feel yourself recollected, lay aside the book, and remain in stillness : at all times read but little, and cease to read when you are thus internally attracted.

The soul that is called to a state of inward silence, should not incumber herself with long vocal prayers : whenever she does pray vocally, and finds a difficulty therein, and an attraction to silence, she should not use constraint by persevering, but yield to the internal drawings, unless the repeating such prayers be a matter of obedience. In any other case, it is much better not to be burdened with and tied down to the repetition of set forms, but wholly given up to the leadings of the Holy Spirit ; and herein, indeed, is every species of devotion inclusively fulfilled in a most eminent degree.

#### OF PETITIONS.

THE soul should not be surprised, at feeling herself unable to offer up to God such petitions, as she had formerly made with freedom and facility ; for now the Spirit maketh intercession for her according to the will of God, that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities : “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Rom. viii. 26. We must co-operate with, and second the designs of God, which tend to divest us of all our own operations, that in the place thereof his own may be instituted. Let this then be done in you ; and suffer not yourself to be attached to any thing, however good it may appear ; for it is no longer good, if it in any measure turns

you aside from that which God willeth of you : the divine will is preferable to all things else. Shake off then all attachment to the interest of self, and live on faith and resignation ; here it is that genuine faith begins truly to operate.

#### OF DEFECTS, OR INFIRMITIES.

SHOULD we either wander among externals, or sink into dissipation, or commit a fault, we must instantly turn inwards ; for having departed thereby from our God, we should as soon as possible return unto him, and suffer in his presence whatever sensations he is pleased to impress. On the commission of a fault, it is of great importance to guard against vexation and disquietude, which springs from a secret root of pride, and a love of our own excellence ; we are hurt, by feeling what we are : and if we discourage ourselves or despond, we are the more enfeebled ; and from our reflections on the fault a chagrin arises, which is often worse than the fault itself.

The truly humble soul is not surprised at her defects or failings ; and the more miserable and wretched she beholds herself, the more doth she abandon herself unto God, and press for a nearer and more intimate alliance with him, that she may avail herself of an eternal strength. We should the rather be induced to act thus, as God himself hath said, "I will make thee understand what thou oughtest to do ; I will teach thee the way by which thou shouldst go ; and I will have mine eye continually upon thee for a guide." Psalm xxxii. 8. vulg.

#### OF DISTRACTIONS AND TEMPTATIONS.

A DIRECT contest and struggle with distractions and temptations rather serves to augment them ; and withdraws the soul from that adherence to God, which should ever be her principal occupation. The surest and safest method of conquest, is simply to turn away from the evil, and draw

yet nearer and closer to our God : a little child, on perceiving a monster, does not wait to fight with it, and will scarcely turn its eyes toward it ; but quickly shrinks into the bosom of its mother, in total confidence of safety : so likewise should the soul turn from the dangers of temptation to her God. " God is in the midst of her," saith the Psalmist, " she shall not be moved ; God shall help her, and that right early." Psal. xli. 5.

If we do otherwise, and in our weakness attempt to attack our enemies, we shall frequently feel ourselves wounded if not totally defeated : but, by casting ourselves into the simple presence of God, we shall find instant supplies of strength for our support. This was the succour sought for by David : " I have set," saith he, " the Lord always before me ; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth : my flesh also shall rest in hope." Psal. xvi. 8, 9. And it is said in Exodus, " The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

#### OF THE PRAYER OF SELF-ANNIHILATION.

SUPPLICATION and sacrifice are comprehended in prayer, which, according to St. John, is " an incense, the smoke whereof ascendeth unto God ;" therefore it is said in the Apocalypse, that " unto the angel was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints." Rev. viii. 3.

Prayer is the effusion of the heart in the presence of God : " I have poured out my soul before God," saith the mother of Samuel. 1 Sam. i. 15. The prayer of the wise men at the feet of Christ in the stable of Bethlehem, was signified by the incense they offered : for prayer being the energy and fire of love, melting, dissolving, and sublimating the soul, and causing it to ascend unto God ; therefore, as the soul is melted and dissolved, in like proportion do odours

issue from it ; and these odours proceed from the intense fire of love within.

This is illustrated in the Canticles, chap. i. 11, where the spouse saith, "While the king sitteth on his couch, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." The couch is the ground or centre of the soul ; and when God is there, and we know how to dwell with him, and abide in his presence, the sacred power and influence thereof gradually dissolves the obduration of the soul, and, as it melteth, odours issue forth ; hence it is, that the Beloved saith of his spouse, in seeing her soul melt when he spake, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense ?" Cant. v. 6.—and iii. 6.

Thus doth the soul ascend unto God, by giving up self to the destroying and annihilating power of divine love : this, indeed, is a most essential and necessary sacrifice in the Christian religion, and that alone by which we pay true homage to the sovereignty of God ; as it is written, "The power of the Lord is great, and he is honoured only by the humble." Eccles. iii. 20. By the destruction of the existence of self-hood within us, we truly acknowledge the supreme existence of our God ; for unless we cease to exist in self, the Spirit of the Eternal Word cannot exist in us : now it is by the giving up of our own life, that we give place for his coming ; and "in dying to ourselves, he himself liveth and abideth in us."

We should, indeed, surrender our whole being unto Christ Jesus ; and cease to live any longer in ourselves, that he himself may become our life ; "that being dead, our life may be hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3. "Pass ye into me," saith God, "all ye who earnestly seek after me." Eccles. xxiv. 16. But how is it we pass into God ? We leave and forsake ourselves, that we may be lost in him ; and this can be effected only by annihilation, which

being the true prayer of adoration, renders unto God alone, all "blessing, honour, glory, and power, for ever and ever." Rev. v. 13.

This is the prayer of truth ; "It is worshipping God in spirit and in truth : " John iv. 23. "In spirit," because we enter into the purity of that Spirit which prayeth within us, and are drawn forth and freed from our own carnal and corrupt manner of praying ; "In truth," because we are thereby placed in the truth of the ALL of God, and the NOTHING of the creature.

There are but these two truths, the ALL, and the NOTHING ; every thing else is falsehood. We can pay due honour to the ALL of God, only in our own annihilation ; which is no sooner accomplished, than he, who never suffers a void in nature, instantly fills us with himself.

Did we but know the virtues and the blessings which the soul derives from this prayer, we should willingly be employed therein without ceasing. "It is the pearl of great price : it is the hidden treasure," Matt. xiii. 44, 45. which, whoever findeth, selleth freely all that he hath to purchase it : "It is the well of living water, which springeth up unto everlasting life : " It is the adoration of God "in spirit and in truth : " John iv. 14—23. and it is the full performance of the purest evangelical precepts.

Jesus Christ assureth us, that the "kingdom of God is within us : " Luke xvii. 21. and this is true in two senses : first God becometh so fully the master and lord in us, that nothing resisteth his dominion ; then is our interior his kingdom : and again, when we possess God, who is the Supreme Good, we possess his kingdom also, wherein there is fulness of joy, and where we attain the end of our creation : thus it is said, "to serve God, is to reign." The end of our creation, indeed, is to enjoy our God, even in this life : but alas ! how few there are who advert to this !

THAT WE ACT MORE NOBLY, AND WITH MORE ENERGY, BY THIS SPECIES OF PRAYER, THAN BY ANY OTHER.

SOME persons, when they hear of the prayer of silence, falsely imagine, that the soul remains stupid, dead and inactive; but, unquestionably, it acteth therein, more nobly and more extensively, than it had ever done before; for God himself is her mover, and she now acteth by the agency of his Spirit. When St. Paul speaks of our being led by the Spirit of God, it is not meant that we should cease from action; but that we should act through the internal agency of his grace. This is finely represented by the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the "wheels, which had a living Spirit; and whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went; they ascended, and descended as they were moved; for the Spirit of life was in them, and they returned not when they went." Ezek. i. 18. Thus the soul should be equally subservient to the will of that vivifying spirit with which she is informed, and scrupulously faithful to follow only as that moves. Her motions now never tend to return in reflection on the creatures or herself; but go forward in an incessant approach toward her chief end.

This action of the soul is attended with the utmost tranquillity. When she acteth of herself the act is forced and constrained; and, therefore, she can the more easily perceive and distinguish it: but when she acteth under the influence of the spirit of grace, her action is so free, so easy and so natural, that it almost seems as if she did not act at all: "He hath set me at large, he hath delivered me, because he delighted in me." Psal. xviii. 19.

When the soul hath got into her central tendency, or in other words, is returned through recollection into herself; from that moment the central attraction becomes a most potent action, infinitely surpassing in its energy every other species. Nothing, indeed, can equal the swiftness of this tendency to the centre: and though an action, yet it is so



noble, so peaceful, so full of tranquillity, so natural, and so spontaneous, that it appears to the soul as if she did not act at all.

When a wheel rolls slowly, we can easily distinguish its parts; but when its motion is rapid, we can distinguish nothing. So the soul which rests in God, hath an activity exceedingly noble and elevated, yet altogether peaceful: and the more peaceful she is, the swifter is her course; because she is proportionably given up to that Spirit, by which she is moved and directed.

This attracting Spirit is no other than God himself, who in drawing us, causes us to run unto him. How well did the spouse understand this, when she said, "Draw me, we will run after thee." Cant. i. 4. Draw me unto thee, O my divine centre, by the secret springs of my existence, and all my powers and senses shall follow the potent magnetism! this simple attraction is both an ointment to heal, and a perfume to allure: "we follow," saith she, "the fragrance of thy perfumes;" and though so powerfully magnetic it is followed by the soul freely, and without constraint; for it is equally delightful as forcible: and whilst it attracts by its potency, it charms with its sweetness. "Draw me," saith the spouse, "and we will run after thee." She speaketh of and to herself: "draw me,"—behold the unity of the centre which attracteth! "we will run,"—behold the correspondence and course of all the senses and powers in following that attraction!

Instead then of promoting idleness, we promote the highest activity, by inculcating a total dependence on the Spirit of God, as our moving principle; for it is "in him, and by him alone, that we live and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 18. This meek dependence on the Spirit of God is indispensably necessary to reinstate the soul in its primeval unity and simplicity, that she may thereby attain the end of her creation. We must, therefore forsake our

multifarious activity, to re-enter the simplicity and unity of God, in whose image we were originally formed. "The Spirit is one and manifold." Wisdom vii. 22. and his unity doth not preclude his multiplicity. We enter into his unity when we are united unto his Spirit, and have one and the same spirit with him ; and we are multiplied in respect to the outward execution of his will, without any egression from our state of union : so that, when we are wholly moved by the divine Spirit, which is infinitely active, our activity must, indeed, differ widely in its energy and degree from that which is merely our own.

We must yield ourselves to the guidance of "wisdom, which is more moving than any motion !" Wisdom vii. 24. and by abiding in dependence on its action, our activity will be truly efficient. "All things were made by the Word, and without him was not any thing made, that was made." John i. 3. God originally formed us in his own likeness ; and he now informeth us with the Spirit of his Word, that "Breath of Life," Gen. ii. 7. which was inbreathed at our creation, in the participation whereof the image of God consisted ; and this life is a life of unity, simple, pure, intimate, and always fruitful. The devil having broken and deformed the divine image in the soul, the agency of the same Word, whose Spirit was inbreathed at our creation, is absolutely necessary for its renovation ; and it can only be renewed by our being passive under him who is to renew it : but who can restore the image of God within us in its primeval form, save he himself who is "the Essential Image of his Father ?"

Our activity should, therefore, consist in endeavouring to acquire and maintain such a state, as may be most susceptible of divine impressions, most flexible to all the operations of the Eternal Word. Whilst a tablet is unsteady, the painter is unable to delineate a true copy : so every act of our own selfish and proper spirit is productive of false

and erroneous lineaments; it interrupts the work, and defeats the design of this adorable painter: we must then remain in peace and move only when he moves us. "Jesus Christ hath the life in himself," John. v. 26. and he should be the life of every living thing.

As all action is estimable only in proportion to the dignity of the efficient principle, this action is incontestably more noble than any other. Actions produced by a divine principle, are divine; but creaturely actions, however good they appear, are only human, or at best virtuous, even when accompanied by grace. Jesus Christ saith, "he hath the life in himself:" all other beings have only a borrowed life; but the Word hath the life in himself; and being communicative of his nature, he desireth to communicate it to man. We should therefore make room for the influx of this life, which can only be done by the ejection of the Adamical life, the suppression of the activity of self. This is agreeable to the assertion of St. Paul: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new!" 2 Corin. v. 17. but this state can be accomplished only by dying to ourselves, and to all our own activity, that the activity of God may be substituted in its stead.

Instead, therefore, of prohibiting activity, we enjoin it; but in absolute dependence on the Spirit of God, that his activity may take place of our own. This can only be effected by the concurrence of the creature: and this concurrence can only be yielded by moderating and restraining our own activity, that the activity of God may gradually gain the ascendancy, and finally absorb all that is ours, as distinguishable from it.

Jesus Christ hath exemplified this in the Gospel: Martha did what was right; but because she did it in her own spirit, Christ rebuked her. The spirit of man is restless and turbulent: for which reason it does little, though it

would appear to do much. "Martha," saith Christ, "thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her," Luke x. 41, 42. And what was it Mary had chosen? Repose, tranquillity, and peace. She apparently ceased to act, that the Spirit of Christ might act in her; she ceased to live, that Christ might be her life. This shows us how necessary it is to renounce ourselves, and all our activity, to follow Christ Jesus; and we cannot follow him, without being animated with his Spirit. Now that his Spirit might gain admission in us, it is necessary that our own proper spirit should be first expelled: "He that is joined unto the Lord," saith St. Paul, "is one spirit with him;" 1 Cor. vi. 17. and David said, "It was good for him to draw near unto the Lord, and to put his trust in him;" Psalm lxxiii. 28. this drawing near unto God is the beginning of union.

Divine union has its commencement, its progression, and its consummation. It is first an inclination and tendency towards God: when the soul is introverted in the manner before described, it gets within the influence of the central attraction, and acquires an eager desire after union: on a nearer approach unto God, it adheres to him; and growing stronger and stronger in its adhesion, it finally becomes one; that is, "one spirit with him;" and it is thus the spirit which had wandered and strayed from God, returns again unto its proper source.

Into this process, which is the divine motion, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we must necessarily enter. St. Paul saith, "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9. therefore, to be Christ's, we must be filled with his spirit, and to be filled with his spirit we must be emptied of our own. The Apostle, in the same passage, proves the necessity of this divine influence or motion: "As many," saith he, "as are led by the Spirit of

God, they are the sons of God." Rom. vii. 14. The spirit of divine filiation is then the spirit of divine action or motion: he therefore adds, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby ye cry Abba, Father."

This spirit is no other than the spirit of Christ through which we participate of his filiation; "And this Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Rom. viii. 16. When the soul yields herself to the influence and motions of this blessed Spirit, she feels the testimony of her divine filiation; and she feels also, with super-added joy, that she hath received not the spirit of bondage, but of liberty, even "the liberty of the children of God." She then finds that she acteth freely and sweetly, though with vigour and infallibility.

The spirit of divine action is so necessary in all things, that St. Paul, in the same passage, foundeth that necessity on our ignorance with respect to what we pray for: "The Spirit," saith he, "also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." This is positive: if we know not what we stand in need of, nor pray as we ought to do, for those things which are necessary; and if the spirit which is in us, and to which we resign ourselves, asks and intercedes for us; should we not give unlimited freedom to its action, to its ineffable groanings in our behalf? this Spirit is the Spirit of the Word, which is always heard, as he saith himself: "I know that thou hearest me always;" John xi. 42. and if we freely admit this spirit to pray and intercede for us, we also shall be always heard. The reason of this is given us by the same apostle, that skilful mystic, and master of the internal life, where he adds, "He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints, according

to the will of God :” Rom. viii. 27. that is to say, the spirit demandeth only that which is conformable to the will of God ; and the will of God is that we should be saved ; that we should become perfect : he therefore, intercedeth for that which is necessary for so great an end.

Why should we then burthen ourselves with superfluous cares, and fatigue and weary ourselves in the multiplicity of our ways, “ Let us rest in peace.” God himself inviteth us to cast our cares, our anxieties, upon him ; and he complains in Isaiah, with ineffable goodness, that the soul had expended its powers and its treasures on a thousand external objects, and mistook its path to happiness, which was attainable by means much more facile : “ Wherefore,” saith God, “ do you spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Isa. lv. 2.

Did we but know the blessedness of thus hearkening unto God, and how greatly the soul is strengthened and invigorated thereby, “ All flesh would surely be silent before the Lord ;” Zech. ii. 13. all would cease and be still, as soon he appeareth. But to engage us farther in a boundless resignation, God assures us, by the same prophet, that we should fear nothing in this abandonment, because he takes a care of us, surpassing the highest tenderness of which we can form an idea ; “ Can a woman,” saith he, “ forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea she may forget ; yet will not I forget thee.” Isa. xlix. 15. O blessed assurance, pregnant with consolation ! Who after this, shall be fearful of resigning themselves wholly to the dispensations and guidance of their God ?

## OF INTERNAL ACTS.

Acts are distinguished into external and internal. External acts are those which bear relation to some sensible object, and are either morally good or evil, merely according to the nature of the principle from which they proceed. I intend here to speak only of internal acts, those energies of the soul, by which she turns internally to some object, and averts from others.

If during my application to God, I should form a will to change the nature of my act, I thereby withdraw myself from God and turn to created objects, and that in a greater or less degree according to the strength of the act: and if, when I am turned towards the creature, I would return to God, I must necessarily form an act for that purpose; and the more perfect this act is, the more complete is the conversion. Till conversion is perfected many re-iterated acts are necessary; for it is generally progressive, though with some it is almost instantaneous. My act however, should consist in a continual turning unto God; an exertion of every faculty and power of the soul purely for him, agreeably to the instructions of the son of Sirach: "Re-unite all the motions of thy heart in the holiness of God;" (vulgate) and to the example of David, "I will keep my whole strength for thee," Psalm lviii. 10. vulg. which is done by earnestly re-entering into ourselves; as Isaiah saith, "Return to your heart," Isa. xlyi. 8. vulg. for we have strayed from our heart by sin, and it is our heart only that God requires: "my son give me thine heart, and let thine eye observe my ways." Prov. xxiii. 26. To give the heart to God, is to have the whole external energy of the soul ever centering in him, that we may be rendered conformable to his will. We must, therefore, continue invariably turned to God, from our very first application to him.

But the soul being weak and unstable, and accustomed to turn to external objects, she is consequently prone to dis-

sipation. This evil, however, will be counteracted if, on perceiving her aberration, she, by a pure act of return to God, instantly replaces herself in him ; and this act subsists as long as the conversion lasteth, by the powerful influence of a simple and unfeigned return to God, and as many reiterated acts form a habit, the soul contracts the habit of conversion ; and that act which was before interrupted and distinct becomes continual.

The soul should not then be perplexed about forming an act which already subsists, and which, indeed, it cannot attempt to form without difficulty and constraint : she even finds that she is withdrawn from her proper state, under pretence of seeking that which is in reality acquired, seeing the habit is already formed, and she is confirmed in habitual conversion and habitual love. It is seeking one act by the help of many, instead of continuing attached to God by one simple act alone.

We may remark, that at times, we form with facility many distinct yet simple acts ; which shows that we have wandered, and that we re-enter our heart after having strayed from it : yet when we have re-entered, we should remain there in peace. We err, therefore, in supposing that we do not form acts ; we form them continually : but they should be in their nature conformable to the degree of our spiritual advancement.

The greatest difficulty with most spiritual people, arises from their not clearly comprehending this matter. Now some acts are transient and distinct, others are continual ; and again, some are direct, and others reflex. All cannot form the first, neither are all in a state suited to form the last. The first are adapted to those who have strayed, and who require a distinguishable exertion, proportioned to the degree of their deviation, which, if inconsiderable, an act of the most simple kind is sufficient.



By the continued act, I mean that whereby the soul is altogether turned toward God in a direct tendency, which always subsists, and which it doth not renew unless it has been interrupted. The soul being thus turned, is "In the love," and abides therein; "and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." 1 John iv. 16. The soul then, as it were, existeth and reposeth in this habitual act, but free from sloth or torpitude; for still there is an unintermitted act subsisting, which is a sweet sinking into the Deity, whose attraction becomes more and more powerful: and in following this potent attraction, the soul presses farther, and sinks continually deeper into the ocean of divine love, maintaining an activity infinitely more powerful, vigorous and effectual, than that which served to accomplish her first return.

Now the soul that is thus profoundly and vigorously active, being wholly given up to God, doth not perceive her activity, because it is direct and not reflex: and this is the cause why some, who do not express themselves properly, say, that they do not act at all; but it is a mistake, for they were never more truly or nobly active: they should rather say, that they did not distinguish their acts, than that they did not act. I allow they do not act of themselves; but they are drawn, and they follow the attraction. Love is the weight which sinks them into God, as into an infinite sea, wherein they descend with inconceivable rapidity from one profound depth to another.

It is then an impropriety to say, that we do not form acts: all form acts, but the manner of their formation is not alike in all. The cause of the mistake is this; all who know they should act, are desirous of acting distinguishably and perceptibly; but this cannot be: distinct and sensible acts are for beginners, and acts of a higher nature for those in a more advanced state. To stop in the former, which are weak and of little profit, is to debar ourselves of the latter;

and again to attempt the latter without having passed through the former, is a no less considerable error.

All things should then be done in their season : every state has its commencement, its progress and its consummation ; and it is an unhappy error to stop in the beginning. There is even no art but what has its process ; and at first we must labour with diligence and toil, but at last we shall reap the harvest of our industry. When the vessel is in port, the mariners are obliged to exert all their strength, that they may clear her thence, and put to sea ; but at length they turn her with facility as they please. In like manner while the soul remains in sin and creaturely entanglements, very frequent and strenuous endeavours are requisite to effect her freedom ; the cords which withhold her must be loosed ; and then by strong and vigorous efforts she gathers herself inwards, pushing off gradually from her old port, and, in leaving that at a distance, she proceeds to the interior, the haven to which she wishes to steer.

When the vessel is thus turned, in proportion as she advances on the sea ; she leaves the land behind : and the farther she departs from the old harbour, the less difficulty and labour is requisite in moving her forward ; at length she begins to get sweetly under sail ; and now proceeds so swiftly in her course, that the oar which is become useless is laid aside. How is the pilot now employed ? he is content with spreading the sails, and holding the rudder. To spread the sails, is to lay ourselves before God in the prayer of simple exposition, that we may be acted upon by his Spirit : to hold the rudder, is to restrain our hearts from wandering from the true course, recalling it gently, and guiding it steadily to the dictates of the blessed Spirit, which gradually gain possession and dominion of the heart, just as the wind by degrees fills the sails and impels the vessel. While the winds are fair, the pilot and the mariners rest from their labours, and the vessel glides rapidly along with-

out their toil ; and when they thus repose, and leave the vessel to the wind, they make more way in one hour, than they had done in a length of time by all their former efforts ; were they even now to attempt using the oar, they would not only fatigue themselves, but retard the vessel by their ill-timed labours.

This is the manner of acting we should pursue interiorly ; it will, indeed, advance us in a very short time, by the divine impulsion, infinitely farther than a whole life spent in reiterated acts of self-exertion ; and whosoever will take this path will find it easier than any other.

If the wind be contrary and blows a storm, we must cast anchor to withhold the vessel ; our anchor is a firm confidence and hope in God, waiting patiently the calming of the tempest and the return of a more favourable gale, as David “ Waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto him, and heard his cry.” Psal. xl. 1. We must therefore, be resigned to the Spirit of God, giving up ourselves wholly to his divine guidance.

#### AN ADMONITION TO PASTORS AND TEACHERS.

If all who laboured for the conversion of others, were to introduce them immediately into prayer and the interior life, and make it their main design to gain and win over the heart, numberless as well as permanent conversions would certainly ensue. On the contrary, few and transient fruits must attend that labour which is confined to outward matters ; such as burdening the disciple with a thousand precepts for external exercises, instead of leaving the soul to Christ by the occupation of the heart in him.

If ministers were solicitous thus to instruct their parishioners, shepherds, while they watched their flocks, might have the spirit of the primitive Christians, and the husbandman at the plough maintain a blessed intercourse with his God ; the manufacturer, while he exhausts his outward

man with labour, would be renewed in internal strength : and every species of vice would shortly disappear, and every parishioner become a true follower of the Good Shepherd.

O when once the heart is gained, how easily is all moral evil corrected ! it is, therefore, that God, above all things requires the heart. It is the conquest of the heart alone, that can extirpate those dreadful vices which are so predominant amongst the peasantry, such as drunkenness, blasphemy, lewdness, envy and theft. Jesus Christ would become the universal and peaceful sovereign, and the face of the church would be wholly renewed.

The decay of internal piety is unquestionably the source of the various errors that have arisen in the church ; all which would speedily be sapped and overthrown, was inward religion to be re-established. Errors are only so far prejudicial to the soul, as they tend to weaken faith, and deter from prayer ; and if, instead of engaging our wandering brethren in vain disputes, we could but teach them simply to believe, and diligently to pray, we should lead them sweetly unto God.

O how inexpressibly great is the loss sustained by mankind from the neglect of the interior ? And how tremendous must the great day of retribution be to those who are entrusted with the care of souls, for not having discovered and dispensed to their flock this hidden manna.

Some excuse themselves by saying, that this is a dangerous way ; pleading the incapacity of simple persons to comprehend spiritual matters. But the oracles of truth affirm the contrary : "The Lord loveth those who walk simply." Prov. xii. 22. vulg. And where can be the danger of walking in "the only true way," which is Jesus Christ ? of giving up ourselves to him, fixing our eye continually on him, placing all our confidence in his grace, and tending with all the strength of our soul to his pure love ?

The simple ones, so far from being incapable of this perfection, are by their docility, innocency, and humility, peculiarly adapted and qualified for its attainment ; and as they are not accustomed to reasoning they are less employed in speculations, less tenacious of their own opinions. Even from their want of learning, they submit more freely to the teachings of the divine Spirit ; whereas others, who are blinded by self sufficiency and enslaved by prejudice, give great resistance to the operations of grace.

We are told in Scripture, "that unto the simple, God giveth the understanding of his law ;" Psalm cxviii. 130. (vulgate) and we are also assured, that God loveth to communicate with them : "The Lord careth for the simple ; I was reduced to extremity and he saved me." Psal. cxiv. 6. vulgate. To warn spiritual fathers against preventing the little ones from coming to Christ, he himself said to his apostles, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xix. 14. It was the endeavour of the apostles to prevent children from going to our Lord, which occasioned this gracious charge. Man frequently applies a remedy to the outward body, whilst the disease lies at the heart.

The cause of our being so unsuccessful in reforming mankind, especially those of the lower class, is our beginning with external matters ; all our labours in this field, do but produce such fruit as endures not : but if the key of the interior be first given, the exterior would be naturally and easily reformed. To teach man to seek God in his heart, to think of him, to return to him whenever he finds he has wandered from him, and to do and to suffer all things with a single eye to please him, is the natural and ready process ; it is leading the soul to the very source of grace, wherein is to be found all that is necessary for sanctification.

I therefore, conjure you all, O ye who have the care of souls, to put them at once into this way, which is Jesus

Christ : nay, it is he himself that conjures you, by the precious blood he hath shed for those entrusted to you, "to speak to the heart of Jerusalem." Isa. xl. 2. vulgate. O ye dispensers of his graces, ye preachers of his word, ye ministers of his sacraments, establish his kingdom!—and that it may indeed be established; make him ruler over the hearts of his subjects! for as it is the heart alone that can oppose his sovereignty, it is by the subjection of the heart that his sovereignty is most highly exalted: "Give glory to the holiness of God, and he shall become your sanctification." Isa. viii. 13. vulgate. Compose catechisms particularly to teach prayer, not by reasoning nor by method, for the simple are incapable thereof; but to teach the prayer of the heart, not of the understanding; the prayer of God's Spirit, not of man's invention.

Alas! by wanting them to pray in elaborate forms, and to be curiously critical therein, you create their chief obstacles. The children have been led astray from the best of fathers, by your endeavouring to teach them too refined, too polished a language. Go then, ye poor children, to your heavenly Father, speak to him in your natural language; and though it be ever so rude and barbarous in the opinion of men, it is not so to him. A father is much better pleased with an address which love and respect in the child throws into disorder, because he knows it proceeds from the heart, than by a formal and barren harangue, though ever so elaborate in the composition. The simple and undisguised emotions of filial love are infinitely more expressive than all language, and all reasoning.

By forming instructions how to love by rule and method the Essential Love, men have in a great measure estranged themselves from him. O how unnecessary is it to teach an art of loving! The language of love though natural to the lover, is nonsense and barbarism to him that loveth not. The best way to learn the love of God, is to love him.—

The ignorant and simple, because they proceed with more cordiality and simplicity, often become most perfect therein. The Spirit of God needs none of our arrangements and methods; when it pleaseth him, he turns shepherds into prophets: and, so far from excluding any from the temple of prayer, he throws wide the gates that all may enter; while wisdom cries aloud in the highways, "Whoso is simple let him turn in hither;" Prov. ix. 4. and to the fools she saith, "Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." Prov. ix. 5. And doth not Jesus Christ himself thank his Father for having "hid the secrets of his kingdom from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes?" Matt. xi. 25.

#### OF THE MOST CERTAIN METHOD TO ATTAIN DIVINE UNION.

It is impossible to attain divine union, solely by the activity of meditation, or by the meltings of the affections, or even by the highest degree of luminous and distinctly-comprehended prayer. There are many reasons for this, the chief of which are as follow:

First, According to Scripture "no man shall see God and God and live." Exod. xxxiii. 20. Now all the exercises of discursive prayer, and even of active contemplation, while esteemed as the summit and end of the passive, and not merely as a preparative to it, are still "living exercises, by which we cannot see God;" that is to say, be united with him: for all that is of man's own power or exertion, must first die, be it ever so noble, ever so exalted.

St. John relates, "that there was a great silence in heaven." Rev. viii. 1. Now heaven represents the fund and centre of the soul, wherein, ere the majesty of God appears, all must be hushed to silence. All the efforts, nay, the very existence of self, or propriety, must be destroyed; because nothing is opposite to God, but propriety; and all the malignity of man is in this propriety, as in the power of its evil

nature ; insomuch that the purity of a soul increases in proportion as it loses this self-hood ; till at length, that which had been a fault while the soul lived in propriety, and acted from self, becomes no longer such, from the purity and innocence that she hath acquired, by departing from that propriety, or self-hood, which caused the dissimilitude between her and God.

Secondly, To unite two things so opposite, as the impurity of the creature and the purity of God, the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of man, much more is requisite than the impotent efforts of the creature : no less than a singular and efficacious operation of the Almighty can ever accomplish this ; for things must be reduced to some similarity, before they can blend and become one. Can the impurity of dross be united with the purity of gold ? What then does God do ? He sends his own Wisdom before him, as the last fire shall be sent upon the earth, to destroy by its activity all that is impure therein ; and as nothing can resist the power of that fire, in like manner this Wisdom dissolves and destroys all the impurities of the creature, and disposes it for divine union.

This impurity, so opposite to union, consists in *propriety* and *activity*.

Propriety, or self, is the source and fountain of all that defilement and corruption which can never be allied to essential purity ; the rays of the sun may glance, indeed, upon filth and mire, but can never be united with them. Activity obstructs union ; for God being an infinite stillness, the soul, in order to be united to him, must participate of his stillness, else the contrariety between stillness and activity would prevent assimilation.

Therefore, the soul can never arrive to divine union but by the repose or stillness of her will ; nor can she ever become one with God, but by being re-established in the purity of her first creation, that is, in this central repose.



God purifies the soul by his Wisdom, as refiners do metals in the furnace. Gold cannot be purified but by fire, which gradually separates from it and consumes all that is earthly and heterogeneous: it must be melted and dissolved, and all impure mixtures taken away, by casting it again and again into the furnace; thus it is refined from all internal corruption, and even exalted to a state that is incapable of farther purification. The goldsmith now no longer discovers any adulterate mixture; its purity is perfect, its simplicity complete. The fire no longer touches it; and were it to remain an age in the furnace, its purity would not be increased, nor its substance diminished. Then it is fit for the most exquisite workmanship: and if, thereafter, this gold seems obscured or defiled, it is no more than accidental defilement, contracted by its contiguity to some impure body; but this is only superficial, and widely different from its former impurity, which was hidden in the very centre and ground of its nature, and as it were identified with it. Those, however, who are ignorant of this process, and its blessed effects, would be apt to despise and reject the vessel of pure gold, sullied by some external pollution; and would prefer an impure and gross metal, that appeared superficially bright and polished. Farther, the goldsmith never mingles together the pure and the impure gold, lest the dross of the one should corrupt the other: before they can be united they must be equally refined: he, therefore, plunges the impure metal into the furnace, till all its dross is purged away, and it becomes fully prepared for incorporation and union with the pure gold.

This is what St. Paul means, when he declares, that "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is:" 1 Cor. iii. 13. he adds, "If any man's work be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." He here intimates, that there are a species of works so degraded by impure mixtures, that though the mercy of

God accepts them, yet they must pass through the fire, to be purged from the contamination of propriety and self; and it is in this sense, that God is said "to examine and judge our righteousness," Psalm xiv. 3. vulg. because that, "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified; but by the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ." Rom. iii. 20, &c.

Thus we may see that the divine justice and wisdom, as an unremitting fire, must devour and destroy all that is earthly, sensual, and carnal, and all self-activity, before the soul can be fitted for and capable of union with God.—Now, this purification can never be accomplished by the industry of fallen man; on the contrary he submits to it always with reluctance; he is so enamoured of self-hood, and so averse to its destruction, that did not God act upon him powerfully and with authority he would for ever resist.

It may perhaps, be objected here, that God never robs man of his free will, he can always resist the divine operations; and that I therefore err in saying God acts thus absolutely, and without the consent of man.

Let me, however, explain myself. By man's giving a passive consent, God, without usurpation, may assume a full power and an entire guidance; for having, in the beginning of his conversion, made an unreserved surrender of himself, to all that God wills of him or by him, he thereby gave an active consent to whatsoever God thereafter might operate or require. But when God begins to burn, destroy, and purify, then the soul, not perceiving the salutary design of these operations, shrinks from them; and, as the gold seems rather to blacken than brighten when first put into the furnace, so she conceives that her purity is lost, and that her temptations are her sins; insomuch, that if an active and explicit consent were then requisite, the soul could scarcely give it, nay often would withhold it. The utmost she can do is to remain firm in her passive disposi-

tion, enduring as well as she is able all these divine operations, which she neither can nor will obstruct.

In this manner, therefore, the soul is purified from all her proper, distinct, perceptible, and multiplied operations, which constitute the great dissimilitude between her and God : she is rendered, by degrees, conform,\* and then uniform ; and the passive capacity of the creature is elevated, ennobled and enlarged, though in a secret and hidden manner, and therefore called mystical : but in all these operations, the soul must concur passively. It is true, indeed, that, at the beginning of her purification, her activity is requisite ; from which, as the divine operations become stronger and stronger, she must gradually cease : yielding herself up to the impulses of the divine Spirit, till she is wholly absorbed in him. But this is often a difficult and tedious process.

We do not then say, as some have falsely supposed, that there is no need of action in the process of divine purification : on the contrary, we affirm it as the gate ; at which, however, we would not have those stop, who are to attain ultimate perfection, which is impracticable, except the first helps are laid aside ; for however necessary they may have been at the entrance of the road, they become afterwards mere clogs, and greatly detrimental to those who adhere to them, preventing them from ever arriving at the end of their course. This made St. Paul say, " Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 13.)

Would you not say that he had lost his senses, who having undertaken an important journey, should fix his abode at the first inn, because he had been told that many travellers, who had come that way, had lodged in the house, and

\* Conform, by passivity and resignation ; and uniform, by " no longer living herself, but by Christ living, moving, and acting in her." Gal. ii. 20.

made it their place of residence? All that we should wish then is, that souls should "press toward the mark," should pursue their journey, and take the shortest and easiest road; not stopping at the first stage, but following the counsel and example of St. Paul, suffer themselves to be guided and governed by the spirit of grace, which would infallibly conduct them to the end of their creation, the enjoyment of God. But while we confess, that the enjoyment of God is the end for which alone we were created; that, "without holiness," none can attain it, and that to attain it we must necessarily pass through a severe and purifying process; how strange is it, that we should dread and avoid this process, as if that could be the cause of evil and imperfection in the present life, which is to be productive of glory and blessedness in the life to come.

None can be ignorant that God is the supreme good; that essential blessedness consists in union with him; that the saints are more or less glorified, according as the union is more or less advanced;\* and that the soul cannot attain this union by the mere activity of its own powers: for God communicates himself to the soul, in proportion as its passive capacity is great, noble and extensive; it cannot be united to God, but in simplicity and passivity, and as this union is beatitude itself, the way to it in simplicity and passivity, instead of being evil, must be good, must be most free from delusion and danger, the safest, the surest and the best.

Would Jesus Christ have made this the most perfect and necessary way, had there been evil and danger therein? No! all can travel this road to blessedness; and all are called thereto, as to the enjoyment of God, which alone is beatitude, both in this world and the next. I say the enjoyment of God himself, and not his gifts; which, as they do not constitute essential beatitude, cannot fully content

\* *Paul. lxxvi. 10.*——*alvi. 10.*

*Zech. ii. 13,*

the immortal spirit : the soul is so noble, so great, that the most exalted gifts of God cannot fill its immense capacity with happiness, unless the Giver also bestows himself. Now the whole desire of the Divine Being is to give himself to every creature, according to the capacity with which it is endued ; and yet, alas ! how reluctantly man suffers himself to be drawn to God ! how fearful is he to prepare for divine union !

Some say, that we should not attempt, by our own ability, to place ourselves in this state. I grant it : but what a poor subterfuge is this ? since I have all along asserted and proved, that the utmost exertion of the highest created being could never accomplish this of itself ; it is God alone must do it. The creature may, indeed, open the window ; but it is the sun himself, that must give the light.

The same persons say again, that some may feign to have attained this blessed state : but, alas ! none can any more feign this, than the wretch, who is on the point of perishing with hunger, can for a length of time feign to be full and satisfied ; some wish or word, some sigh or sign, will inevitably escape him, and betray his famished state.

Since then none can attain this blessed state, save those whom God himself leads and places therein ; we do not pretend to introduce any into it, but only to point out the shortest and safest road that leads to it : beseeching ye not to be retarded in your progress by any external exercises, not to sit down a resident at the first inn, nor to be satisfied with the sweets which are tasted in the milk for babes. If the water of eternal life is shown to some thirsty souls, how inexpressibly cruel would it be, by confining them to a round of external forms, to prevent their approaching it : so that their longing shall never be satisfied, but they shall perish with thirst.

Let us all agree in the way, as we all agree in the end, which is evident and incontrovertible. The way has its

beginning, progress, and end ; and the nearer we approach the end, the farther is the beginning behind us : it is only by proceeding from one, that we can arrive at the other.— Would you get from the entrance to the distant end of the road, without passing over the intermediate space ? and surely, if the end is good, holy, and necessary, and the entrance also good, can that be condemnably, as evil, which is the necessary passage, the direct road leading from the one to the other ?

O ye blind and foolish men, who pride yourselves on science, wisdom, wit, and power, how well do you verify what God hath said, that “ His secrets are hidden from the great and wise, and revealed unto THE LITTLE ONES,—THE BABES !”

#### **ERRATA.**

**Page 505, first line of the second paragraph, for "Prayer is the application to the heart of God," read "Prayer is the application of the heart to God."**











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